1950

Toussaint Louverture: Relations with Great Britain and the United States, 1798-1802

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TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE: RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES 1798-1802

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

February

1950

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to investigate British and American relations with Toussaint Louverture and the effects of their policies in Saint-Domingue, especially on the career of that great Negro leader. Before revolution accomplished the overthrow of the ancient French monarchy, Saint-Domingue, the western section of the island of Hispaniola, which is known today as Haiti, was not only the richest colony of France but the wealthiest colonial possession of any nation in the entire West Indies. Following the breakdown of authority in the island consequent on the political upheavals in the mother country slave insurrections added interracial strife to the bitter political conflicts and civil war already raging and resulted in the utter devastation of the colony. Out of the chaos produced by this impact of the French Revolution on Saint-Domingue arose, in the person of an unassuming ex-slave, a military commander of the first rank who seemed capable of restoring order in the distracted colony. As a rebel against France during the Republican and early Napoleonic period when the United States and Great Britain were at odds with France Toussaint came into the international plans of the British who were ever interested in the Caribbean trade empire. In the United States Federalists, aware of danger from England and Napoleon yet eager to share in that trade, directed American policy along one line, anti-Federalists along another. The effects of these conflicting political aims and divergent Anglo-American views on the fortunes of Toussaint Louverture and Saint-Domingue, and their reactions on Britain and the United States will constitute the subject of the following study.

CHAPTER I

THE EMERGENCE OF TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

The island of Hispaniola, discovered by Columbus on his first voyage to the new world, was called by the Spaniards Santo Domingo. By the Treaty of Ryswick 1697 Spain ceded to France the western third of the island, originally a base for piratical expeditions against the mainland. Instead of changing the name to Saint-Dominique, the French equivalent of Santo Domingo, the French Gallicized the Spanish term and called their colony Saint-Domingue.[1] Sugar became the leading crop of this section, and for its culture thousands of Negro slaves were imported from Africa. They contributed greatly to the prosperity of the island, but their own lot was a very humble one; so when a Negro boy was born, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, of slave parents on the Bréda plantation of Haut-du-Cap, no record apparently was made of the event. At least, none has been preserved. In any case, no one could have foreseen, at that moment, that this rather frail slave baby would become the greatest and most famous citizen of France's prized colonial possession. So not the date nor even the exact

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1 British and American contemporaries of Toussaint and later non-French writers, often use St. Domingo or San Domingo to indicate the French and Spanish parts of the island, which has resulted in some confusion. See Rayford W. Logan, Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti 1776-1891, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1941, 2-3. The designations Saint-Domingue for the French section and Santo Domingo for the Spanish have been employed in this thesis, except when quoting directly from some author who used other terms.

year is known of the birth of François Dominique Toussaint Louverture.[2] His son, Isaac, gave the date of his father's birth as May 20, 1746, and May, 1743 is given by other historians.[3] We do not know whether Toussaint himself knew his exact age, as in August, 1802, when he was imprisoned at the Fort de Joux, he gave his age as fifty-eight, which would make 1744 the year of his birth. Yet in another place he said he was fifty at the outbreak of the Revolution, and whether he meant the "début" of the Revolution in France or the slave insurrection in the colony, neither would coincide with either the date 1744 or 1746. It is quite possible that he did not know his age or his birthday, as neither Latins or Latin-Americans (except where they have come under North American influence) pay any attention to birthdays. It is the custom to celebrate the feast of one's patron saint, which is what Toussaint did. In fact, when he became governor he gave the whole colony a holiday on two of his patronal feast-days, the feast of St. Dominic, which was also that of the island, and All Saints Day.[4]

Contradictory statements of Toussaint and his son Isaac about Toussaint's parentage have also puzzled historians. According to Isaac, his grandfather

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2 "L'Ouverture", meaning "the opening or beginning", is the surname adopted by Toussaint from a nickname he had been given, like Stonewall Jackson, in the thick of battle. According to the most reliable accounts, Polverel, seeing Toussaint opening up gaps in the ranks of his enemies, exclaimed, "Comment cet homme fait donc ouverture partout!" Modern usage justifies dropping the apostrophe in spelling his name. See H. Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture, Auguste A. Hereaux, Port-au-Prince, 1920, I, 2.

3 Ibid., 1.

4 Colonel A. Nemours, Histoire Militaire de la Guerre d'Indépendance de Saint-Domingue, Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1925, I, 81.

was the second son of a West-African chieftain, Gaou-Guinou, of the Arada tribe.[5] Captured in battle, he was sold into slavery and carried to Saint-Domingue. Here he married a woman of his own tribe, "pays", and they had eight children, three girls and five boys. The youngest boy was named for his grandfather. The eldest was Toussaint Louverture. The mother apparently died young, and from Isaac's account one is led to think the father did, too. He said that an old Negro, Pierre Baptiste, who had been educated by the missionaries, was the godfather of Toussaint Louverture and taught him French, a little Latin, and geometry.[6] Yet Toussaint himself says: "They make me the unhappiest of men, in depriving me of my liberty; in separating me from those I hold dearest in the world, a father advanced to the great age of one hundred-five, who needs my help, my adored wife....and my dearest family, who constituted the joy of my life."[7]

Could he have spoken thus of one who was not his natural father but his godfather? Today, certainly, the ordinary American or Englishman would not. However, Bellegarde, a modern Haitian writer, tells us the black "creole" of "ancien Saint-Domingue" had an entirely different outlook:

> The [black] creole attributed his superiority to baptism, symbol of his initiation into Christian civilization. Thus the African was very eager to have himself baptized...Respect

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5 Memoires et Notes d'Isaac Louverture in Antoine Metral, Histoire de l'expedition des Français a Saint-Domingue sous le Consulat de Napoleon Bonaparte, A. A. Renouard, Paris, 1825, 325.

6 Ibid., 326.

7 Memoir of Toussaint Louverture in Pauleus-Sannon, III, 233.

> for one's godfather and godmother outweighed that for one's father and mother. The strength of that relationship contracted in baptism is perpetuated to our own time...[8]

Evidently Korngold knows nothing about godfathers, and he takes it for granted despite Isaac Louverture (who, presumably, surely would have known) and Pauléus-Sannon to the contrary, that Pierre Baptiste was the father of Toussaint.

> The fact that Toussaint was a devout Catholic, hated the voodoo religion and tried to suppress it, makes it appear certain that from earliest childhood he had been reared by someone devoted to the Catholic faith. Pierre Baptiste was such a man; the son of an African chieftain who had come to the colony at a mature age definitely would not have been.[9]

Moreover, he asserts that Pierre Baptiste "had acquired his knowledge in the service of the Jesuit Fathers, who had conducted a school at Haut-du-Cap. When the Jesuits were banished from the colony they had freed their slaves."[10] What follows is more remarkable than the idea of the Jesuits being allowed to dispose of any of their property at the time of their expulsion - as in all recorded instances whenever the Jesuits, or any other religious order in the Church was persecuted, their property was invariably pounced on by rapacious and avaricious politicians, while the ink was still wet on the decree of spoliation. However, on the next page, Korngold asks us to believe that Pierre Baptiste, after being freed by the Jesuits, worked on another plantation, where he married and had two children, then

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8 Dantès Bellegarde, La Nation Haitienne, J. de Gigord, Paris, 1938, 314.

9 Ralph Korngold, Citizen Toussaint, Little, Brown, Boston, 1945, 330.

10 Ibid., 56.

came to the Bréda plantation, and took another "helpmate," who was the mother of Toussaint and his seven other children.[11]

Now, as we have seen, it is a well known fact that the approximate date of Toussaint's birth is circa 1744-1746. The Jesuits were suppressed in France in 1764. Therefore, that his father could have belonged to and been freed by the Jesuits previous to Toussaint's advent into this world is a chronological, not to say biological, impossibility. He was certainly not in his twenties at the time of the Revolution! Either Toussaint or his father, or both, could have been taught by the Jesuits, of course, without ever belonging to them. However, with all due respect to that great order, it is the opinion of this writer that Toussaint, like many of the rest of us, could have grown up to be a devout, practical, well-informed Catholic without being taught by the Jesuits at all.

What sort of milieu was it in which Toussaint grew up? What was the position of Negro slaves, the majority of the population at that time, in the richest colony of the Occident? Slavery, it can easily be seen, is invariably a most difficult state, but it can be rendered happier or intolerable by conditions. Father Charlevoix describes "the misery" of many in Saint-Domingue - the poor huts in which they lived, their meagre fare and long hours of work.[12] Hardly any modern writer fails to note that, or to quote as typical, the story of a traveller, de Wimpffen, whose whole

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11 Ibid., 56.

12 Pierre F. X. de Charlevoix, Histoire de l'isle Espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue, chez François Didot, Paris, 1730, II, 505.

book betrays a sour and jaundiced outlook on the island.[13] He had this story on hearsay only, but the lady was pointed out to him.

> A woman whom I have seen, a young woman, one of the most beautiful women of the isle, gave a dinner. Furious, at discovering one pastry missing, she ordered her Negro cook to be seized, and thrown into the oven which was still burning.[14]

If such shocking atrocities had been of as common, every-day occurrence as some writers would like us to believe, it is surprising that slave insurrections had not occurred earlier. This seems not to have been the case. None are mentioned in Saint-Domingue until the outbreak of the French Revolution. This is all the more surprising as several occurred during the eighteenth century in the neighboring British colony of Jamaica.[15] It must be understood, too, in spite of such tales as that of de Wimpffen, that French planters were not free to regard their slaves simply as their private property whom they could treat as cruelly as they pleased without any restraint.[16] The rights of the slaves as human beings were recognized and protected by law, and owners were required to execute certain duties with regard to them, such as, to teach them the Catholic faith, not to make them work on Sundays and holydays, to feed and clothe them properly and to

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13 Baron de Wimpffen, Voyage à Saint-Domingue pendant les années 1788, 1789 et 1790, chez Cocheris, Paris, 1797. As soon as he landed he wrote back to France, "Quel pays! Quelles moeurs! Quelles...!" And he goes on in the same strain for two volumes, speaking of the Negroes as monkeys, etc. I, 28.

14 Ibid., II, 10.

15 Catalogue of the Du Simitière Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Records Society, Philadelphia, 1940, 67-70.

16 Nemours, I, 48-64.

support those too old to work. It was forbidden to break up families by sale and especially, under severe penalty, to maim, torture or kill slaves.[17] The historian, Bryan Edwards, himself a Jamaica planter, who had often visited and knew well the conditions in Saint-Domingue, would lead us to think that they were very far from being as intolerable as conclusions based on de Wimpffen's evidence would indicate. He denies

> ...the prevalent notion that the French planters treat their Negroes with greater humanity and tenderness than the British... yet no candid person who has had the opportunity of seeing the Negroes in the French Islands, and of contrasting their condition with that of the peasantry in many parts of Europe, will think them by any means the most wretched of mankind.
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> On the whole, if....we are to consider that condition of political society as relatively good, in which, notwithstanding many disadvantages, the lower classes are easily supplied with the means of healthy subsistence; and a general air of cheerful contentedness animates all ranks of people, [Then Saint-Domingue was well off, for that he concludes was] the condition and situation of the French colony of San Domingo in the year 1788.[18]

Perhaps Toussaint Louverture would have agreed with Edwards. The life of those slaves who worked in the fields was much harder than that of those who, like Toussaint, were household slaves. He seems to have been employed by his masters in positions of trust, was allowed to acquire property, and is even said to have employed five other slaves to work for him.[19] Toussaint himself says: "I had a fortune a long time ago; the Revolution

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17 Ibid., 59-60. See Articles XLII to XLVII of the Code Noir.

18 Bryan Edwards, Historical Survey of the French Colony of San Domingo, printed for John Stockdale, London, 1801, III, 14-15.

19 John Reilly Beard, Toussaint Louverture: a Biography and Autobiography, James Redpath, Boston, 1863, 40.

found me with about six hundred forty-eight thousand francs."[20] He had learned how to read, Pauleus-Sannon tells us, from "his godfather, an old Negro at Haut-du-Cap, named Pierre Baptiste."[21] Later among the books in his study were found: Caesar's Commentaries, Herodotus, Plutarch, etc.; Toussaint must have read some of them, at least, for he compared himself in his imprisonment to Hannibal hunted to his last retreat. Usually, while he was in power, Toussaint dictated his letters, to five secretaries at once, they say. When, as in the touching letter he wrote to his wife from prison, he had to be his own secretary, his spelling and construction betrayed his insufficient mastery of that art.[23] It had to suffice, however, and genius supplied for his lack of formal education.

As we saw above, Toussaint once compared himself with Hannibal in his misfortunes. He was like him, too, in another way. Everything we know about Hannibal comes to us from his enemies. Even they were forced to admire him, much as they feared him. On the pages of their histories, he is portrayed to us a great patriot, soldier, and leader. Much the same can be said of Toussaint Louverture. He defeated the English general, Maitland, who considered as unworthy of a British alliance "a person of Toussaint's description,[24] yet he was impressed by him.

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20 Memoir in Pauléus-Sannon, III, 232-233.

21 Pauléus-Sannon, I, 5.

22 Ibid., 6.

23 Ibid., III, 162.

24 Charles Callan Tansill, The United States and Santo Domingo. A Chapter in Caribbean Diplomacy 1798-1873, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1938, 65.

> But the preponderance of power possessed by Toussaint was not the only reason he had been selected as the outstanding chief of Haiti. The "strict adherence" of the "black general" to his "engagements, upon the evacuation of Port-au-Prince and the general disposition he had evinced to moderation and forbearance" were additional factors that had influenced General Maitland's attitude toward Toussaint. It should be clearly understood, however, that this inclination towards Toussaint was not based upon any "personal predilection for anyone of the Chiefs of the Island of Saint Domingo."[25]

Another Englishman, wrecked on the coast of Saint-Domingue a year later when Toussaint was on unfriendly terms with the British, disguised himself as an American, of whom there were a multitude at Cap François, and met Toussaint informally at the Hôtel de la République where he stayed. Here he played billiards with Toussaint, noting in him the attractive qualities which drew men - his "democratic manner", the charm of his intelligent conversation.[26] Later, grateful to him for his release from prison, he referred to Toussaint Louverture as "that truly great man."[27] Another contemporary English writer defended Toussaint's resistance to the Napoleonic expedition from the charge of selfish ambition.

> That he should cherish a wish to retain the high station which he so well deserved...was naturally to be expected, and the wish was prompted by an ambition of no dishonorable kind.[28]

The English whom he drove out of the island appreciated Toussaint much more than the mulattoes whom he conquered next. After Toussaint's death

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25 Ibid., 38.

26 Marcus Rainsford, A Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti, Comprehending a view of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo with its ancient and modern state. James Cundee, London, 1805, 215-216.

27 Ibid., 230.

28 Edwards, V, 122-123.

they came back into power, and helped to undo his work of unifying the island, but they never forgave him. Following their tradition, a mulatto historian writes of him thus.

> The domination of Toussaint, established by bloody reaction, was now momentarily consolidated in the department of the South. There terror reigned everywhere; no one dared to pronounce the name of Rigaud [the mulatto chief whom Toussaint had just supplanted] in the most innocent conversation; and if anyone spoke of Toussaint it had to be in the most eulogistic terms .... [He denies that Toussaint Louverture executed as many Rigaudians as others have accused him of.] I do not mean to excuse these abominable crimes which later brought about the violent fall of Toussaint Louverture; but one must be truthful. Even if these crimes were committed only on a small number of people, they deserve, none the less, the execration of posterity.[29]

Another mulatto writer, although he describes Madiou's whole book as "woven throughout of erroneous facts and false appreciations"[30] is just as indignant over Toussaint Louverture's overthrow of Rigaud. "Toussaint had let his ambition grow to gigantic heights....His pride was like that of some men who say that the earth is too small to contain their individuality."[31] Unlike Maitland, who admired Toussaint's strict adherence to his word, Saint-Remy thought Toussaint's scrupulous regard for his oath was ridiculous.[32] This tells rather against the biographer than his subject.

Later writers liked to compare Toussaint with Napoleon. They follow

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29 Thomas Madiou, Histoire d'Haiti, Republished by the Department of Public Instruction, Port-au-Prince, 1923, II, 62.

30 Joseph Saint-Remy, Vie de Toussaint Louverture, Moquet Libraire, Paris, 1850, 18.

31 Ibid., 226.

32 Ibid., 144-145.

Adams in this, though the comparison is somewhat forced.

> Gentle and well meaning in his ordinary relations, vehement in his passions, and splendid in his ambitions, Toussaint, was a wise, though severe ruler, so long as he was undisturbed; but where his own safety or power was in question he could be as ferocious as Dessalines and as treacherous as Bonaparte. In more respects than one his character had a curious resemblance to that of Napoleon, the same abnormal energy of mind and body; the same morbid lust for power and indifference to means, ...the same love of display...reckless personal courage, and, what was much more remarkable, the same occasional acts of moral cowardice...[33]

And others like Korngold, seem to enjoy fastening on Toussaint a reputation for immorality for which there is no reliable evidence.[34] Yet there are people who insist on dragging in that sort of thing even when (I could say especially when) a man's whole life is in outward contradiction to it. "Everyone knows," as one author puts it, "that he was very pious."[35] He was "of a serious nature, and morals, almost too austere,"[36] according to another. If we examine Toussaint's deeds, we find they correspond to what we would expect of one who practised his religion seriously. He set himself to the task of undoing, so far as he could, on his advent to power, the harm done to religion in the disorganization and division created by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, (which suggested to one author another comparison with Napoleon) made Catholicism the state religion, and enforced

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33 Henry Adams, History of the United States of America during the Administration of Thomas Jefferson, Albert and Charles Boni, N.Y., 1930, Book I, 382-382.

34 See Korngold, 209, for another "Casket Canard" comparable to that of the famous Mary Stuart letters.

35 Nemours, I, 79.

36 Pauléus-Sannon, 4

the regulations customary in such cases. He went further, not only exhorting parents to bring up their children in the love and fear of God, but himself questioned these same children on the catechism.[37] Practices such as these caused him to be called a religious fanatic, of course, especially by the irreligious. It was in character that he should outlaw divorce.[38] He also forbade his officials to have more than one wife.[39] Toussaint, at least, gave an example in this. He was happily married to a quiet, domestically-inclined Negro woman named Suzanne Simon, by whom he had two sons, Isaac and St. Jean; and whose son by a former marriage, Placide, he adopted and treated as his own.

He was living quietly and contentedly on the Bréda plantation when the slave insurrection broke out in 1791. This had been prepared by the events in France and her colonies since 1789. It is assumed by some that Toussaint was one of the instigators of the slave revolt.[40] Again his actions would seem to belie that. He stayed on the plantation, kept order there, after his master was obliged to retire to Cap François; and when he saw that he could no longer protect her at home, sent his mistress to safety at the Cap under the trusted escort of his own brother Paul. A significant trait in

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37 Nemours, 79-81.

38 Ibid., 95.

39 No one so far has discovered any parallel with Napoleon in this act of Toussaint's which was probably not a decree easily enforced. Charlevoix, (II, 505,) informs us the blacks regarded the putting away of a wife as a "natural right" and marriage "they envisaged as a more burdensome form of slavery even than that in which they were born."

40 Pauléus-Sannon, I, 8.

his character was his continued loyalty to, and care for the support of his former master and family to the end of his life.

When Toussaint did joint the insurgents, it was not as a captain of soldiers, but as a medical attendant. This, as well as his delay in joining, makes it seem unlikely that he was one of the organizers of revolt. That he was is expressly denied by one writer: "Toussaint, called later Louverture, had not taken part in the terrible insurrection of August, 1791."[41] It was even more unlikely that his master, acting in union with Governor Blanchelande, had used him to organize the slave revolt. Yet Blanchelande and the royalists were charged by the French Revolutionary leaders with instigating the slave rising.

> As in France, they accused the aristocrats of burning their own castles in order to calumniate the good common people, so in Saint-Domingue they accused them of inciting the rising of their Negroes, burning their own homes and harvests....The insurrection, according to these revolutionaries, was royalist, because many of the Negroes wishing to imitate the military institutions of the royal army, the only one they knew, adopted the same gradations of military rank, the white cocade and flag, and certain terms, in use in the royal army... In its deliberations the Assembly adopted the calumnies of Brissot..."The massacres", he said with triumphant air, "began the twenty-first of August, the very day when the flight of the King to Varennes became known; evidently they were organized by the counter-revolutionaries." And he accused Blanchelande of them![42]

The fact that in 1793 Toussaint and the other Negro leaders went over to the Spanish, allies of the royalists, makes it look as though they sympathized with the royalists, though it is alleged that they went because

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41 Ludovic Sciout, "Les Commissaires Sonthonax et Polverel", Revue des Questions historiques, 1892, 467.

42 Ibid., 416-423.

they were promised, "liberté, exemptions, jouissances et prérogatives."[43] Under the Spanish, Toussaint received from capable officers that splendid formation in military science and tactics which was to make a review of his troops a sight to arouse admiration.[44] He developed strategic practices all his own, too, suited to the nature of his soldiers and adapted to his native terrain. By May 1794, Toussaint was recognized as a formidable military leader and had taken from the French their principal strongholds in the North. The English held those of the South. However, in February 1794 the Paris Convention had voted to free all the Negro slaves in the colony, and Toussaint was persuaded by Laveaux to return to the French allegiance.[45] The French at that time were in a desperate state, yet thanks to Toussaint, they reconquered most of the North. Then the mulattoes put Laveaux into prison at Le Cap. Toussaint released him and became de facto governor. On May 1, 1797, the title general-in-chief of the French armies in Saint-Domingue, was conferred on him by the French authorities. This was the situation when he turned his attention to the problem of the English invasion of Saint-Domingue.

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43 Pauléus-Sannon, I, 127.

44 Rainsford, 217.

45 Pauléus-Sannon, I, 167-168.

CHAPTER II

ANGLO-FRENCH WAR IN SAINT-DOMINGUE 1793-1798

When the French Revolution began, there had been a movement of sympathy toward it at first on the part of many Englishmen who disliked on principle the old autocratic form of government which was displaced. Gifts of money, even, were sent by many enthusiasts to the French Assembly. In December, 1789, "Bryan Edwards, M.P., the historian of the West Indies, forwarded a quarter of his French revenues."[1] But this initial enthusiasm for the Revolution in its first phases lessened as the movement grew more violent, disorderly and despotic. There was sympathy, then, for many of the French refugees who escaped to England. Some of these came from Saint-Domingue, where Bryan Edwards had undergone a change of heart when he saw the clouds of smoke from burning homes and sugar fields rolling over towards Jamaica, and frightened French planters arrived pleading for immediate aid to put down the slave insurrection.

In Saint-Domingue, difficulties between the inhabitants of the island, the rich white planters, "gran blancs", the poor whites, "petits blancs" and "hommes de couleur", free blacks and mulattoes, over political rights and power, aggravated by violent and anarchist elements from revolutionary France, had precipitated a civil war, the horror of which the slave insurrection immensely augmented. To add to the confusion some of the colonists

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1 John G. Alger, Englishmen in the French Revolution, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1889, 50.

and some of the Negroes, among them Toussaint, had gone over to the service of the Spanish government in the eastern end of the island. Others, disgusted with, or in despair of the French Republic, called in their hereditary enemies the English.

> For these last [the colonists] it was not just a question of simply escaping the tyranny of the commissioners Sonthonax and Polverel, agents of the Republic but of complete destruction. Oppressed, deported by Sonthonax, for several months they had been begging the English authorities at Jamaica, or in the British Cabinet, for protection against the revolutionaries. The colonists of Grand Anse, in arms against the commissioners, sent as their representative to London to negotiate for them, Arnaud de Charmilly. September 3, 1793, a treaty was arranged between the colonists and Williamson, Governor of Jamaica, who was empowered to negotiate with them.[2]

The British had received emissaries from Saint-Domingue before this, for among the charges made by the National Assembly of France at the Declaration of war February 1, 1793 was: "...that it [the British government] also received the chiefs of the rebels of the French West India colonies."[3] The British, though they were outraged by the conduct of the French Republic, seem to have had difficulty thinking up some good causes for war, or so one would judge from some that they enumerated:

> The cabinet of St. James published a counter declaration that divers injurious proceedings had lately taken place in France, in derogation of his Majesty's crown and the just rights of his people; and that several unjust seizures had been made of the ships and goods of his Majesty's subjects,

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2 Ludovic Sciout, "Les Commissaires Sonthonax et Polverel," Revue des Questions historiques, 1892, 458.

3 John Campbell, Naval History of Great Britain including the history and lives of the British Admirals, printed for John Stockdale, London, 1813, VI, 384.

> followed afterwards by an open declaration of war against his Majesty and his ally the republic of the United States.[4]

Also cited as a reason for war, to which the United States, too, must object, was the opening of the Scheldt to navigation. This the British were obliged by treaty to withstand, though the Dutch, for whose benefit the provision had been made, offered no objection. Again the British took umbrage at the French offer, or threat, to grant "fraternity" and "assistance" to other budding republics.[5]

Whether or not they had legitimate cause for going to war, the British had good reasons for wishing to capture the French West Indies. They knew well their value as in general:

> about one fourth the total amount of British commerce both export and import was done in them...[the West Indies] notwithstanding the fact that other nations owned the largest and richest of the islands, as well as those producing the best sugar and coffee.[6]

"Before the catastrophe," one author informs us, "the products of the whole colony were valued at 220 million francs."[7] Another, an Englishman, who had personally investigated conditions, gives an itemized estimate:

> There were freighted in 1787, for Europe alone, 470 ships, containing 112,253 tons and navigated by 11,220 seamen. Many of them were vessels of very large burden; and the following is an accurate account, from the intendant's return, of the general

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4 Ibid., 387.

5 Ibid., 387.

6 A. T. Mahan, The influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire. Little, Brown, Boston, 1894, I, 109.

7 Sciout, 423.

exports, on an average of the years 1787-1788 and 1789: viz.

Average Exports from the French Part of St. Domingo before the Revolution

			Livres
Clayed sugar	lbs.	58,642,214	41,049,549
Muscovalo sugar	lbs.	86,549,829	34,619,931
Coffee	lbs.	71,663,187	71,663,187
Cotton	lbs.	6,698,858	12,397,716
Indigo	Hhds.	951,607	8,564,563
Molasses	Hhds.	23,061	2,767,320
An inferior sort of rum, called taffia	Hhds.	2,600	312,000
Raw hides	NO.	6,500	52,000
Tan'd ditto	NO.	7,900	118,500
Total value at the ports of shipping in livres of St. Domingo was.....			171,544,666

being equal to £4,956,780 sterling money of Great Britain; and if all the smuggled articles were added together with the value of mahogany and other woods, the whole amount would probably exceed five millions of pounds sterling.[8]

However, the desire of absorbing all the rich trade of the French West Indies was not the only motive which led to the British invasion. Both the great political parties of England, Whigs and Tories, were in favor of aiding the French royalists, but Pitt who was Prime Minister at the time, and Grenville, who was his foreign secretary

> seemed to have judged of all the French Royalists by the spoiled children of the first emigration. Burke lent to all Royalists the virtue which was only to be found in La Vendée, and his supporters were strongly for supporting all French Royalists whatever. Had they joined the government in 1792 they would certainly have insisted upon sending help at once to the

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8 Bryan Edwards, Historical Survey of the French Colony of San Domingo, printed for John Stockdale, London, 1801, III, 144.

> Vendean leaders; and such help, given in 1793, would have come in time, and might have changed the course of history.[9]

The policy adopted, which was patterned on one originally employed very successfully in a previous war by Pitt's father, the Earl of Chatham, was the choice, not of Pitt but of one of his subordinates, a Scotsman, Henry Dundas, later Lord Viscount Melville. He had been Secretary of State for the Home Department from 1791 to 1794 and in that year was also appointed Secretary of State for the War Department and continued to "support that character until 1801."[10] Before he had been, since 1782, Treasurer of His Majesty's Navy Royal and Ships. Perhaps it was in that capacity that he learned to appreciate the effectiveness of a navy in carrying on war over a far-flung battle front. Or it may have been, as Fortescue believes, decided on as a matter of expediency:

> Pitt knew nothing whatever about war, and therefore fell almost wholly under the influence of Dundas as to the manner of conducting it. Dundas also knew nothing whatever about war, but he had a very shrewd idea of what would please the people at the next election. He therefore bent all the military resources of England toward the acquisition of French possessions, which would make a brave show in the Gazette, and would be held as security for reimbursement of the cost of the war when the Monarchy should be restored. Royalist refugees, some of them honest men, others consummate rogues pressed above all for a British occupation of the French West Indies, and in particular of Saint Domingo, the wealth of which exceeded that of all the rest of the Antilles put together. This was just the scheme to attract Dundas. The capture of St. Domingo

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9 Sir John W. Fortescue, British Statesman of the Great War 1793-1814, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1911, 94.

10 The Trial by Impeachment of Henry Lord Viscount Melville, for High Crimes and Misdemeanors, before the House of Peers in Westminster Hall, between the 29th of April to the 17th of May, 1806. Printed for and by J. Robertson, Edinburgh, 1806, 211.

would be popular - a good advertisement, as the phrase goes - would rejoice the hearts of the mercantile community and - a great temptation to Pitt - would bring money into the Exchequer. The only objections to it were that the operations would be very costly in human lives, and that they would contribute not in the least to the disablement of France.[11]

The wealth of the island of Saint-Domingue being well known to the British government, the British diplomats were very careful to incorporate into the terms of their agreement with the French provisions for profiting from it, as appears from the report later submitted to the House of Commons:

> Your Committee next proceed to the consideration of such papers as they have obtained, respecting the regulations and checks applied from time to time to control the Expenditure in Jamaica, not borne by the Island itself, and also the more important head, of Service in St. Domingo.
>
> In the first place, they deem it necessary to state, that by the terms of the Capitulation of the Latter Island, dated the 18th of August 1793, it was stipulated, that the local taxes destined to acquit the Expenses of Garrisons, and the Administration of the Colony, should be assessed in the same manner as in 1789 "except the alleviations and remittances which shall be granted to the inhabitants whose property has suffered by fire, till their possessions are repaired;" and that "an Account shall be kept by the said Colony of all the sums advanced by Great Britain for supplying the deficiency of the said taxes, which deficiency as well as all the Expenses of the said Colony (except those of His Majesty's Naval Forces destined for its protection) shall always be defrayed by the said Colony."[12]

The French were more concerned, perhaps, with articles two, three, four, and five. The second provided for police protection, and the third, fourth,

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11 Fortescue, 294-295.

12 Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Finance, Expenditure of the Public Revenue, Secretary of War, Comptrollers of Army Accounts and Paymaster General, Reported by Charles Abbot, Esquire, 19 July, 1797 in Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, Reprinted by Order of the House, 1801, XII, 351.

and fifth for their civil and juridical status. Particularly interesting, in view of the complicated situation, was the religious settlement. Translated from the French it reads:

> The colonists had asked in their petition that: "The Catholic religion would be maintained and no other evangelical cult accepted"; England answered: "granted, on condition that priests who have sworn allegiance to the republic shall be sent away and replaced by those who have taken refuge in the States of His Britannic Majesty."[13]

When the English squadron under Commodore Ford carrying Lieutenant Colonel Whitelocke and his troops from Jamaica disembarked at Jeremie in September, 1793, as one writer has it, they were received by the colonists as "libérateurs."[14] According to another account, the "French met them with a joyous welcome and took the oath of allegiance to Great Britain amidst the loudest exclamations of joy."[15] If this description sounds rather astonishing, another by one who accompanied the expedition seems more convincing:

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13 Sciout, 458. As barbarous penal laws against Catholics still formed part of the English code this preference on the part of the English government for priests who had remained loyal to the Faith and its rejection of those who accepted the schismatical Civil Constitution of the Clergy, seem strange indeed. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was a measure designed merely to render the Catholic Church in France as subservient to the civil power as was the Anglican Church in England. However the English insistence on non-juring clergy in this instance is understandable if (as seems probable) the others had taken any part in instigating the slave insurrections. See Brown, 181 and B. C. Clark, A Plea for Hayti with a glance at Her Relations with France, England and the United States for the last Sixty Years, Eastburns Press, Boston, 1853, 13.

14 Ibid., 459.

15 Jonathan Brown, The History and Present condition of St. Domingo, William Marshall and Co., Philadelphia, 1837, I, 262.

> concerning the white proprietors...a large proportion....perhaps more than nine-tenths of the whole had quitted the country....of those who remained....the greater part were desperate adventurers etc.....and unfortunately, among those of better principles, I amafraid but a very small number were cordially attached to the English..... It were unjust, however, not to observe that among them were some distinguished individuals, whose fidelity was above suspicion and whose services were highly important.[16]

Looking back at the event later it was recognized that the force provided "was altogether too small...The British administration knew little of the difficulties...like the French Assembly."[17]

Edwards says of it:

> The armament allotted...was composed of only the thirteenth regiment of foot, seven companies of the forty-ninth and a detachment of artillery, altogether amounting to about eight hundred and seventy, rank and file, fit for duty,.....
> From this...it is evident that the invasion of St. Domingo was an enterprise of greater magnitude than the British government seems to have imagined. Considering the extent of natural strength of the country, it may well be doubted whether all the force Great Britain could have spared, would have been sufficient to reduce it to subjection, and restore it...to such a degree of order...as to make it a colony worth holding.[18]

The English took Jeremie, and Mole St. Nicholas, though, almost without a blow, as "the forts in this part of St. Domingo were garrisoned by Dillon's regiment, who were well disposed to the cause of the royalists."[19] Yet disaster soon began to befall the English. There were some small reverses; the rainy season began; yellow fever broke out, and deaths occurred daily.

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16 Edwards, 153-154.

17 Brown, 261.

18 Edwards, 155.

19 Campbell, 399.

Eight hundred more men were sent by Governor Williamson from Jamaica, leaving only four hundred for the protection of that island.[20]

About this time, doubts of the wisdom of the government's conduct of the war began to be expressed in Parliament. Thus, in January, the assertion of Dundas that "the exertions of the navy had never been better conducted" was denied by Fox who among other charges of inefficiency asserted that "the West India fleet had been ready on the 15th of May, [1793] but it had been detained for want of convoy till the end of August.[21]

The capture of Port-au-Prince in 1794 and many vessels laden with valuable cargoes was a momentary success. But the British early were to experience disappointment in their expectation of collecting money in the island. Instructions had been sent to Major-General Williamson in October and December 1794 from the Duke of Portland to that effect:

> you are to take care that those Revenues which were paid to his late most Christian Majesty in the year 1789.... be levied and paid into the hands of the Receiver General who shall be appointed by our High Treasurer or the Lords Commissioners of our Treasury.[22]

Yet, in place of the profit they expected to reap from Saint-Domingue, the records show ever-increasing expenses incurred, instead, in the conquest and occupation of the colony. During the first year were:

> drawn upon the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury the following sums; viz. £31,179, 14s. 3d. £100,000. £149,543, 3s. 8d: £150,708. 14s. 6d. £172,284. 8s and £260,000. for carrying on His Majesty's Service in the Island of Saint Domingo, from the 1st of January 1795 to the 29th February 1796, - I am directed

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20 Edwards, 156.

21 Campbell, 406-407.

22 Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Finance, etc., Appendix F 2, XII, 378.

> by Mr. Dundas to acquaint you...that...Sir Adam Williamson's Bills,...should be paid on account. At the same time, Mr. Dundas has observed with much regret and surprise, that so immense a sum should be called for on account of Services performed in Saint Domingo, during a period in which a very large amount has already been discharged.[23]

Complaints had already been made in a letter of August 15, 1795 from George Rose to Sir Adam Williamson that his accounts were not properly drawn up and certified.[24] Earlier in June, 1795, a Mr. Wigglesworth was appointed, with a Mr. Crauford, who died immediately upon reaching the colony, to investigate Sir Adam Williamson's accounts and the financial state of Saint-Domingue.[25] The commanding officer in Saint-Domingue was also informed by the Duke of Portland September 30, 1795, that:

> it seems absurd to suppose that a Council of Justice, consisting of eleven members and one President, who joins to his situation that of Chief Justice of Police, with a Procureur General, must not be sufficient for the administration of justice in all the districts now in our possession.....
> but pending military operations, they must necessarily, be but very few, and therefore the only direction that can be given on this point, is, that civil appointments should be as limited in number and as economically paid as possible; for, while the military contest for the country continues, little other than the military authority ought to prevail; ...and when no urgent reason operates to the contrary, you ought to regulate your conduct conformably to the powers vested in you by your commission, which both authorizes and directs you, to be guided by the Law Martial, where circumstances require it.[26]

In May 1796, Sir Adam Williamson was in England where his accounts were being examined. The "sums referred to in... his Letters amount to upwards

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23 Copy of a letter in the Nineteenth Report from the Select Committee on Finance, Appendix F. 7, XII, 382.

24 Ibid., Appendix F. 1, XII, 378.

25 Ibid., Appendix F. 2, XII, 379.

26 Ibid., Appendix F. 5, XII, 381.

of £1,230,300." and Mr. Secretary Dundas "is of the opinion it would be right, that a complete explanation should be immediately had with him upon the subject; and that a minute investigation should instantly be entered upon by the respective departments connected with the Services for which Sir Adam Williamson's Bills were drawn."[27] In August 1796 General Forbes was warned not to incur expenses at Saint-Domingue without previous permission.[28] The same refrain is sounded in a letter of December 16, 1796, announcing the appointment of Major-General Simcoe, "and he has received directions....to effect a great and immediate reduction of the enormous expense which has been incurred in that island for sometime past."[29] However, Saint-Domingue continued to be expensive, as we see from a letter of January 18, 1797, announcing to Wigglesworth:

> My Lords have also ordered 200 Pipes of Madeira Wine, of the best quality, to be sent to you by the earliest conveyance, in different sized casks.
>
> You will of course call the attention of General Simcoe to the extravagant price of Forage; and there can be no doubt but that in consequence of the instructions he carried out, as well as from his anxious desire to lessen the enormous expenditure in the Island, he will reduce the number of rations as low as the service will possibly admit.[30]

In the next letter to the same, on January 27th he is informed that "only 1,520,833 pounds of Pork" is being sent "for the Troops in Saint-

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27 Ibid., XII, 352.

28 Ibid., Appendix F. 9, XII, 379.

29 Ibid., Appendix F.11, XII, 380.

30 Ibid., Appendix F.12, XII, 380.

Domingue for the present year, relying upon the information...that you can obtain the remainder of the necessary supplies in the Island, or from America."[31] The next day, January 28, 1797, brought the indication that the financial situation in Saint-Domingue had become extremely exasperating:

> Having so lately, as in my Letter of the 21st of November last, expressed to you the importance, and indeed the absolute necessity of a full and distinct communication being made to the Lord Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury respecting the expenditure in St. Domingo, I should not have had occasion now again to call the attention of their Lordships to the subject, but for the Bills you have drawn, which have just appeared, to so immense an amount as Seven hundred thousand pounds at once. It is so perfectly intelligible that you should not be able with convenience to transmit your Accounts in due form; accompanied by all the necessary vouchers, earlier than the time mentioned in your Letter of the 10th of last month; but you certainly could, without the smallest difficulty, have sent a general statement as would have been essentially useful in showing the several heads of expense, so as to have enabled the board to form some kind of judgment on the subject, on which they might have acted.[32]

In addition to the pecuniary expense involved, another element had added to the costliness of the British invasion of Saint-Domingue. This was disease. One author reports simply for the year 1796, "In St. Domingo, our loss of men from sickness was immense, while our progress in subduing the French part of this island was very slow and difficult."[33] New hospitals were required to take care of the influx of patients.[34]

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31 Ibid., Appendix F. 13, XII, 380.

32 Ibid., Appendix F. 15, XII, 380.

33 Campbell, VI, 460.

34 Thirty-third Report from the Select Committee on Finance, 26 June, 1798, XIII, 568.

Another author describes the campaigns in Saint-Domingue thus:

> Meanwhile bad news began to come from the West Indies. The old troops first sent out there did their work brilliantly,...and with the help of the French Loyalists occupied St. Domingo. This done, they began to die like flies, of yellow fever. Such a thing was nothing new. It had happened in every West Indian expedition since the days of Cromwell and might have been foreseen with absolute certainty. Very soon the West Indian Garrisons were so weak as to be almost powerless. .... The mortality was such that in every summer, the work of the previous winter was cancelled and a new army required to do it afresh. In one instance a complete battalion, officers and men, was extinguished by sickness, every soul on the muster roll having died; and the Negro insurrection in St. Domingo was as far as ever from being subdued. By the end of 1796 the losses of the army since the beginning of the war amounted to forty thousand dead - dead, mind you, not wounded or disabled - being more than Wellington's army lost from death, desertion, discharge, and all other causes during the whole of the Peninsular War. Forty thousand more had been discharged as unfit for service, chiefly from debility after yellow fever. Thus after four years of fighting, Pitt and Dundas had thrown away eighty thousand men, the destruction of whom had not cost one-tenth of that number to France. In fact neither France nor the Revolution were appreciably the worse.[35]

Since this was the case, it is not surprising that the British Parliament should have begun to consider the prospect of withdrawing from the French colonies. When the speech from the throne was read in the House of Commons in November 1797, Mr. Bryan Edwards noted the change in language from that of similar speeches:

> He then in particular adverted to our West India conquests; and his knowledge of those Islands led him to give it as his decided opinion, an opinion which has been fully and fatally confirmed, that if it was tomorrow in our power to conquer the whole of the French islands, the conquest so far from being advantageous or productive, would be ruinous in the holding.[36]

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35 Fortescue, 103-105.

36 Campbell, VII, 105.

The same author further chronicles succinctly: "In the West Indies nothing of importance occurred this year [1798] except the evacuation of St. Domingo."[37] There was a little more to it than this, however. Though the British may have contemplated leaving, they did not go until Toussaint Louverture in the spring of 1798 captured Mirebalais and forced them to evacuate Port-au-Prince, Croix des Bouquets, Archaye and St. Marc.[38] They held on to Jeremie and Mole St. Nicholas until fall, but were then obliged to yield these. In August, Maitland and Toussaint arranged terms for the complete withdrawal of the British force. This took place in October after five years of British occupation from 1793 to 1798, the cost of which has been estimated at a total of twelve million pounds.[39] Thus in the end the British

> attempt to occupy the place left vacant by France...was foiled by the character of the country and the genius of the greatest leader whom the Negro race has ever produced.
>
> Born a slave, Toussaint Louverture by his own ability raised himself to supreme command of the French forces in Santo Domingo by his own initiative, though under the apparent direction of the French officials in the island.... It was largely due to him that the....English were driven from the French part of the island in which they had gotten a foothold....[40]

Before he left, General Maitland signed, in August, a secret commercial treaty with Toussaint, the basis of the later Anglo-American accord with him.[41]

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37 Ibid., 130.

38 H. P. Davis, Black Democracy, The Story of Haiti, Dial Press, N.Y., 1928, 53-54.

39 H. Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture, Imprimerie A. Heraux, Port-au-Prince, 1932, II, 113.

40 Treudley, 127-128.

41 Pauléus-Sannon, II, 103.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH-AMERICAN RAPPROCHEMENT IN 1798

That relations between the newly independent republic of the United States and the former mother country could, at the beginning, have been very cordial was certainly not to be expected. Not only patriotic feeling on both sides would be opposed; there were also too many practical problems involved. For the British, one of these was the abandonment of the former ideal of trade monopoly. A modern English writer summarized the history of this period thus:

> "Ring out the old, ring in the new," say the historians when in 1783, the old mercantile Empire breaks in twain, and when in 1815 England emerges from the Napoleonic Wars with a new empire won.[1]

To the "old" mercantilist who was being rung out, prospects were insecure and not nearly so cheerful:

> The central doctrine of Mercantilism was the belief that national prosperity and power could be secured by maintaining a self-sufficing and controlled economic order. In the Mercantile ideal of a "perfect" empire, colonies were desirable to complement the mother state, to relieve it of dependence on others, and to add to its resources for international competition. This ideal was well expressed by the pamphleteer who compared colonies to subordinate buildings of a mansion and satirically agreed to separate from them, saying, "...let us take down these superfluous buildings, and we shall find every commodity under our own roof."[2]

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1 W. P. Morrell, British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1930, 1.

2 Frederic J. Ericson, The British Colonial System and the Question of Change of Policy on the Eve of the American Revolution, University of Chicago, 1943, 1.

By gaining her independence the United States put herself outside the British Colonial system, and one anonymous pamphleteer thought that she should be made to feel it, that commodities formerly obtained by the British West Indies from the United States could be supplied to her by Canada and should be.[3] "In 1783 the mercantile system still prevailed. It was the outcome of the desire for self-contained and complete national life, to secure which the Navigation Laws had been passed..."[4] The prosperity of the British West India possessions had been built on that economic system and they were trying to hold to it - "An implicit compact for a mutual monopoly."[5] Even when the situation began to call forth such pamphlets as, "The Radical Cause of the Present Distress of the West India Planters" it was held by some that trade with America would not help much.[6] Others had felt very strongly that it would and vainly urged a departure from former principles:

> Mr. Burke, with his usual comprehensive discernment, has expressed a generous indignation against all prohibitory systems, and the accomplished minister in the direction of our finances, brought into Parliament a provisional bill for the re-establishment

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3 A British Traveller, The Policy of Great Britain considered with Relation to her North American Provinces and West Indian Possessions; Wherein the Dangerous Tendency of American Competition is developed and the necessity of recommencing a Colonial System on a vigorous and extensive scale, exhibited and defended; with plans for the promotion of immigration and strictures on the treaty of Ghent, Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London, 1816, 108-110.

4 Charles Herbert Currey, British Colonial Policy 1783-1915, Oxford University Press, London, 1916, 8.

5 Lillian M. Penson, The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies, A Study in Colonial Administration mainly in the Eighteenth Century, University of London Press, London, 1924, 208.

6 "Pamphlets on West Indian Affairs", Edinburgh Review, 1809, XIII, 409.

of a commercial intercourse between the kingdom and America, founded on very beneficial and enlarged principles, and which, had it passed into a law, would, I am persuaded, have tended in its consequences, not to the injury of our trade and navigation, as apprehended but in a very eminent degree, to the support and encouragement of both.

I have indeed ever thought and said, and ever shall think and say, that the war with America on the part of Great Britain, was conceived in wickedness, and continued through insanity; but I had hopes, after the discipline we have undergone, that at length we were nearly cured of our delirium; for we have been blistered and blooded, pumped, purged and chained to the earth.[7]

But Edwards' hopes for the effect of the "discipline" they had undergone were not realized apparently:

That revolt of the American colonists taught the imperial ruling groups in England a lesson in how to govern colonies wisely is nothing but a legend.... In regard to economic colonial policies the former system of mutual preferences and monopolies was retained...

Neither the selfish proposals of the sugar planters and merchants and of the English trading houses engaged in the trade with the United States, nor the consistent reasoning of the Pitts and Shelburnes were able to overcome the united opposition of all those who had a stake in the preservation of the old mercantilist system (namely the ship-owners) and those who, with or without re-examining its principles, regarded the Navigation Act as the inviolable foundation of Britain's sea power and security. The arguments of the Sheffield school achieved a striking victory and Pitt's bill was rejected. The first attempt to unfetter Britain's trade had failed as had those groups who wished to draw the United States back into the orbit of the British Empire.[8]

However there was a movement for free trade afoot as is indicated by one anonymous pamphleteer who was extremely eager to "ring in the new."

Commerce should be as free as the ocean on which it travels; all restraints introduce ruin, and all duties, customs, and excises, are nothing more than tyranny passing a veto upon the

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7 Bryan Edwards, Thoughts on the Late Proceedings of Government Respecting the Trade of the West India Islands with the United States of America, T. Cadell, London, 1784, 4-5.

8 Klaus E. Knorr, British Colonial Theories, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1944, 212-219.

> prosperity of trade. Kings can place no turn-pikes on the sea; they therefore erect their imposts in our national ports, and make us pay that at home which they could never exact upon the wide bosom of the main. Britain has spent as much to terminate smuggling as she has gained by her multitude of customs and excise laws; the remedy was worse than the disease and it is well if the nation is not ruined by the experiment.[9]

Though they might not be ready to go all the way with the author of "The British Tocsin," the English Ministers were not unwilling to make some modifications in the West India trade laws, as Knorr has indicated, but the concessions in that respect that Jay was able to get incorporated into his treaty were so small, and those he had made to Great Britain so large, exceeding his instructions, that both Jay and his treaty were rendered unpopular in America.[10] After cutting out the articles referring to the West Indies, the Senate ratified the treaty in order to avoid war.[11] More than that was obtained. England no longer attempted to end American trade with the French West Indies as she had just previously:

> The treaty negotiated by Jay in 1794 was England's pledge that, while she might place annoying restrictions on American trade with the French colonies, she would not again attempt to prohibit it entirely.[12]

The ratification by the Senate of Jay's treaty was regarded by Jefferson as a victory for those attached to British interests, "The Anglomen have in

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9 The British Tocsin; or Proofs of National Ruin, Daniel Isaac Eaton, London, 1795, 32-33.

10 John Spencer Bassett, A Short History of the United States, Macmillan, N.Y., 1929, II, 272.

11 Ibid., 273.

12 Mary Treudley, The United States and Santo Domingo, 1789-1866. Reprinted from the Journal of Race Development, Worcester, Mass., 126.

the end got their treaty through, and so far have triumphed over the cause of republicanism."[13] Their temporary ascendancy had been largely aided by the mistakes of the French minister, Gênet, and the clever use the Hamiltonian Federalists had made of these. As in England, so in the United States, the first news of the overthrow of the former absolute monarchy and establishment of constitutional government was greeted with enthusiastic sympathy by many Americans.[14] The conduct of Gênet, the French Minister, alarmed others who welcomed Washington's proclamation of neutrality in 1793.[15] Hamilton and King took the lead in spreading abroad the report of Gênet's famous threat to appeal "from the President to the people." Hamilton wrote, "I am of the opinion with you that the charge ought to be insisted upon; and should it be finally necessary...General Knox and myself will come forward as witnesses."[16] This was not, of course, from any personal antipathy to Gênet, but from distrust of and opposition to his government:

> I spoke to him [President Washington] respecting Fauchet, the new French Minister, who had that day arrived in town and intimated my concern relative to the Fate of Gênet; so long as we were in danger from his Intrigues, we wished him ill - that no longer existing we felt compassion and were anxious he should not be sacrificed [to the guillotine according to the orders of the French government.][17]

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13 Letters from Jefferson to Monroe, July 10, 1796, in The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, John C. Riker, New York, 1854, IV, 148.

14 Charles R. King, Editor, Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1894, I, 437.

15 Ibid., Letter of Rufus King to Alexander Hamilton, April 24, 1793, 439-440.

16 Ibid., Letters of Alexander Hamilton to Rufus King, 457.

17 Ibid., Written statement of King, 478.

Hamilton also wished to take advantage of the change of government in France to abrogate our treaty with her of 1778, on the grounds that we had made it with the monarchy.[18] The French were disappointed that we had not entered the war as their ally or assumed a more benevolent neutrality and the treaty with England further displeased them.

> Angry because of the failure of the United States to live up to the treaty obligations entered into in 1778 which guaranteed French possession of her West India Islands, France entered upon a policy of retaliation which bore hard on the Santo Domingan trade.....by 1797.... American vessels were daily taken.....In America the same feeling that had manifested itself against England in 1794 was aroused against France by these depradations on America commerce.[19]

This "suicidal" policy of the French Republic strengthened the position of those Federalists who were seeking closer cooperation with England against France especially with regard to Saint-Domingue. After their evacuation the British plans for Saint-Domingue were first to protect Jamaica and the other British islands from the infiltration of Revolutionary ideas, as Rufus King, our minister to England, learned before the British withdrew:

> Abercombie is gone, and General Sincoe is going to the West Indies. I don't find that any considerable reinforcement is going or gone out. The conquest of St. Domingo I apprehend to be relinquished as impracticable, the principal care must be to prevent that communication between the British Islands and Guadeloupe and St. Domingo, which will expose the former to the disorders and ruin which are seen in the latter.[20]

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18 John C. Hamilton, Editor, The Works of Alexander Hamilton, Charles S. Francis and Co., N. Y., 1851, IV, 356, seq.

19 Treudley, 126-127.

20 Letter from Rufus King to Oliver Wolcott, Adams' Secretary of Treasury, Dec. 12, 1796, in Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams edited from the papers of Oliver Wolcott by George Gibbs, Printed for the Subscribers, N. Y., 1846, I, 473-474.

General Maitland made what was supposed to be a secret treaty with Toussaint in August, 1798 in order to secure this and other British aims, which were:

> To crush, if possible, the French Agent, to preserve the tranquility of those who have been under the British Government,...and so far as it is compatible with these essential points to throw into the channel of British Commerce as large a proportion of the produce of Saint Domingo as possible...[21]

It was King in London, who got in touch with Secretary Dundas, as soon as news of the Maitland-Toussaint secret treaty was out in England.[22] For:

> From 1793 when war was declared between France and Great Britain to 1798...the most important question facing the United States in its dealing with the island of Santo Domingo was in regard to its trade with that island....the...desire was to absorb the trade which war with England, the mistress of the seas, had compelled France to forego. And in the main the desire was fulfilled. France, forced during the period to rely on the U. S. for a large proportion of its own food supply, was unable to take any steps toward the provisioning of its colonies, while the carrying trade between the French West Indies and Europe also fell into American hands.[23]

Thus the United States was eager to be allowed to be a party to Great Britain's treaty with Toussaint. Yet the very publishing of the news of his treaty with them caused trouble for Toussaint and made him annoyed with the British.[24] For the United States to attempt trade with Saint-Domingue without an arrangement with Great Britain would not have been possible. President Adams was to give it as his

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21 Charles Callan Tansill, United States and Santo Domingo A Chapter in Caribbean Diplomacy 1798-1873, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1938, 38.

22 Ibid., 37.

23 Treudley, 125-126.

24 Ibid., 136.

> opinion...that, if the powers of Saint Domingo will not admit British ships of war or commerce into their ports, the British government ought to be contented with sufficient assurances of neutrality of that island during the war between France and England, and not insist on defeating the connections between the United States and Saint-Domingo. It is my earnest desire, however, to do nothing without the consent, concert and cooperation of the British government in this case. They are so deeply interested that they ought to be consulted, and the commerce of the island is not worth to us the risk of any dispute with them.[25]

In 1798 Pickering needed no urging to act in concert with the British. "His guiding principle at all times was the commercial interest of New England."[26] Also, "though Adams' Secretary of State he was Hamilton's henchman. To understand what was in the wind, it is necessary to consider that at this time Hamilton seriously contemplated a general attack on French and Spanish America with the aid of the British navy and of the Revolutionary adherents of Francisco Miranda,"[27] King, in London, had also been instrumental in initiating this project.[28]

> It accorded with the plans of Mr. Pitt, at that time, to enter with promptitude into the scheme proposed for the emancipation of South America. The outline of the preceedings was fully agreed upon; and so far had the preparations advanced, that General Miranda, in a letter to Mr. Hamilton, the much lamented legislator of the United States, dated 6th April, 1798, thought himself authorized to write in the following terms. "This letter will be delivered to you, my dear and respected friend, by my

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25 Letter of John Adams to Timothy Pickering, June 15, 1799, in The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States, Editor, Charles Francis Adams, Little, Brown, Boston, 1853, VIII, 658.

26 Samuel Flagg Bemis, The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, Yale University Press, II, 178.

27 Ludwell Lee Montague, Haiti and the United States 1714-1938, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1940, 38.

28 "Lettre aux Espagnols-Americains," Edinburgh Review, 1809, XIII, 277-278.

> compatriot Dom X, bearer of most important dispatches for the President of the United States; He will tell you in confidence that the freedom of the whole continent of the new world is confided to us by Providence. The only danger that I foresee is the introduction of French principles which poison freedom in its cradle and will end soon by destroying yours."[29]

This was followed by another letter to Hamilton who by this time was virtually commander of the army of the United States, although nominally he was second in command under Washington.

> "Your wishes are in some respects fulfilled, because they are convinced here, that, on the one hand, there should not be employed for operations by land any English troops, that all land forces should be solely American; on the other, the naval forces should be English only. Everything is going smoothly here, and we are only awaiting the consent of your illustrious President to set out with all possible speed."[30]

Miranda's letter was in reply to one of Hamilton's in which he had suggested "a fleet of Great Britain, and an army of the United States," and had also stated that "I could personally have no participation in it, unless patronized by the government of this country."[31] The patronage of the United States government was not given, however; President John Adams did not answer Miranda's letter to him. "There can be no doubt that the bare suggestion of this alliance with Great Britain materially contributed to modify the policy towards France, although Mr. Adams was not then informed to the extent of the sympathy which General Miranda had succeeded in enlisting

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29 Ibid., 291.

30 Ibid.

31 Letter of Hamilton to Miranda of August 22, 1798, in John C. Hamilton, History of the Republic of the United States of America as traced in the Writings of Alexander Hamilton and His Contemporaries, Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1868, VII, 218-219.

among some leading Federalists."[32] Through King in London, Adams also knew what General Miranda did not that,

> if Spain is able to escape being brought under the entire control of France, England, between whom and Spain, notwithstanding the war, a certain understanding appears to exist, will at present engage in no scheme to deprive Spain of her possessions in South America...Miranda will be detained here under one pretense or another until events shall decide the conduct of England.[33]

In fact England would oppose any premature attempts against the Spanish colonies:

> England, since Miranda's arrival here, but without his knowledge, has informed Spain, not only that she will not countenance or assist the Spanish colonies in becoming independent, but that she will join her in resisting the endeavors of others to accomplish it, provided...[34]

Adams had opposed Hamilton's appointment as ranking general after Washington, and been annoyed at the round-about way in which the Hamiltonians had secured this through Washington's intervention: "There has been too much intrigue in this business with General Washington and me."[35] Yet Adams did not oppose the Miranda project in 1798, merely to deprive Hamilton of glory as has been alleged.[36] He did not, knowing the British plans, answer Miranda's letter. Neither did he altogether put a quietus on the plan. Hamilton went on with it, as a matter of fact, for a year. He wrote thus to

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32 Charles F. Adams, Editor, Works of John Adams, VIII, 582.

33 Ibid., Letter from King to Pickering, February 26, 1798, VIII, 585.

34 Ibid., Letter from King to Pickering, April 6, 1798, VIII, 586.

35 Ibid., 588. See also notes pp. 588-590.

36 John C. Hamilton, History of the Republic of the United States, VII, 220.

a friend in Congress, the following January:

> It is desirable to complete and prepare the land force which has been provided for by law. Besides eventual security against invasion we ought certainly to look to the possession of the Floridas and Louisiana and we ought to squint at South America.[37]

Even Washington, looking at affairs from a soldier's point of view apparently, concurred with Hamilton in some of his designs as to an offensive war. In a letter to Governor Trumball he said:

> I question whether the evil arising from the French getting possession of Louisiana and Florida would be generally seen, until felt, and yet no problem in Euclid is more evident or susceptible of clearer demonstration. Not less difficult is it to make them believe that offensive operations oftentimes are the surest, if not in some cases the only means of defense.[38]

Adams, not being a soldier, did not look at the situation from a military man's viewpoint. He looked at it, as it would seem from his objections, from the point of view of a frugal New Englander and taxpayer:

> One thing I know, that regiments are costly articles everywhere, and more so in this country than any under the sun. If this nation sees a great army to maintain, without an enemy to fight, there may arise an enthusiasm that seems to be little foreseen. At present there is no more prospect of seeing a French army here, than there is in Heaven.[39]

Adams did think it important, however, to send out warships against the French privateers, so though he delayed recruiting for the army, he "did everything he could to speed up the construction of the navy."[40] The building

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37 Ibid., 322.

38 Ibid., 318.

39 C. F. Adams, Works of John Adams, VIII, 613.

40 Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, Henry Holt Co., N. Y., 1936, 120.

of a navy would have the effect of killing two birds with one stone. It could serve as a weapon against the French and as a curb on the British, so our commerce would not be completely at their mercy. Adams had good reasons, as we have seen, for not believing Miranda's assurance that,

> England, feeling at last that her safety and future happiness depend absolutely on an alliance and intimate attachment to America, is resolved to put aside all spirit of jealousy and commercial monopoly and to cooperate with you in favor of this important object.[41]

England was ready to cooperate though in another commercial treaty with Toussaint Louverture, with much misgiving on the part of General Maitland, who had as little trust in Americans as President Adams had in the English.[42] That the British were slow to abandon the policy of commercial monopoly is shown in their proposal to establish a joint British-American company for the exclusive control of the trade with Saint-Domingue.[43] This was rejected by the United States as not in accordance with American customs.[44] The final arrangements that we made with the British and Toussaint were concluded during our naval war with France and are described in the next chapter which deals with the naval war as it affected Saint-Domingue.

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41 Letter of Miranda to Adams, dated August 17, 1798 in Works of John Adams, VIII, 581.

42 Tansill, 56.

43 Adams, VII, 634.

44 Treudley, 135.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN QUASI-ALLIANCE WITH TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

1798 - 1800

As we have seen, the American Treaty with Great Britain, ratified by the Senate in 1796, was resented by the French Republic which retaliated by decrees against American shipping, with disastrous effect on the rapidly expanding trade of the United States. After the Revolution American commerce had reached pre-war levels again by 1789.[1] From 1789 to 1797 American export trade trebled and imports quadrupled. Our sea commerce, however, was harried by the Spanish, English and French, after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1793, especially by the French in the Caribbean.[2]

The French Republic also showed annoyance at the recall of Monroe, a Republican, and the sending of Pinckney, a Federalist, as our minister to Paris, to such an extent that they refused to receive him, thus suspending relations for a period with the United States. Adams, willing to make some attempt to conciliate France, sent three commissioners, Pinckney, Marshall and Gerry, to negotiate our differences with the Directory. At the same time there was a great deal of disaffection over French attempts to dictate policy in this country, which in his address to the special session of Congress called in May, 1797, because of the state of our relations with

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1 Dudley W. Knox, History of the United States Navy, P. G. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1936, 44.

2 Ibid., 45.

France, President Adams voiced thus:

> Such attempts ought to be repelled with a decision which shall convince France that we are not a degraded people humiliated under a colonial spirit of fear and sense of inferiority, fitted to be the miserable instruments of foreign influences, and regardless of national honor, character and interest...[3]

The President urged that preparations for war should not be neglected:

> It remains for Congress to prescribe such regulations as will enable our seafaring citizens to defend themselves against violations of the law of nations.....in addition...it appears to me necessary to equip the frigates the building of which had been previously authorized by Congress and provide other vessels of inferior force.....[4]

Talleyrand's treatment of the three Commissioners of the United States in the famous X Y Z affair became known when Adams sent their reports to Congress in April, 1798. Congress responded to these insults with energetic measures, the provisions of which were almost equivalent to a declaration of war. One such was, an Act more effectually to protect the Commerce and the Coasts of the United States, by which the President was

> hereby authorized to...direct the commanders of the armed vessels belonging to the United States to seize...any...armed vessel which shall have committed or which shall be found hovering on the coasts of the United States for the purpose of committing depredations on the vessels belonging to the citizens thereof.[5]

A Department of the Navy was created by an act of Congress of April 30, 1798, "whose chief officer shall be called the Secretary of the Navy, whose duty it shall be to execute such orders as he shall receive from the President of the

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3 Documents Relating to the Controversy Over Neutral Rights Between the United States and France, 1797-1800, in Pamphlet No. 24 published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., 1917, 29-30.

4 Ibid., 31-32.

5 Ibid., 59.

United States relative to...matters connected with the naval establishment of the United States."[6] Benjamin Stoddert was appointed to fill this position, and volunteers came forward to command and to man the ships as is evinced by the following application to Captain John Barry of Revolutionary fame, now Senior Officer of the new Navy.

Baltimore April 18 1798

Sir After Saluteing You. Beg leave once more to trouble you. As Ships of War is to be provided, and to every appearance a War is inevitable, (in consequence I offer to Serve,) I wish to be on the Stage of Action once more, Be pleased to take the Necessary Steps, so that I may if possible Obtain a Command, let me request of you to inform me of the channel through which the applications are made, and if further Steps is necessary to be taken by me."""

Wishing you health and prosperity,
And Remain Dear Sir,
Yours with the Greatest Respect
My Best respects
to Mrs. Barry David Porter

Captain Barry

P.S. I have put my son David [afterwards Commodore in the War of 1812 and father of the future Admiral Porter] on board the frigate Constellation (A Midshipman) he is Just Entered his 19th year, he is active, and promising, and understands navigation Well, a tolerable good Scholer other ways; has been Several voyages to Sea, and Flatter myself he will use exertions to merit Something in our Young Navy.[7]

War was not only expected but desired in some quarters as we learn from a letter of June 12, 1798 from Stephen Higginson, Navy Agent at Boston: "I am glad to find that Congress continue rising, they must keep on and adopt Mr. Foster's motion for open War, it is the path of safety and honour, and

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6 Dudley W. Knox, Editor, Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War between the United States and France, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1935, I, 59-60.

7 Ibid., 55-56.

nothing short of it will save our country from being revolutionized."[8] By the end of the year 1798 the Naval forces in the West Indies had been organized into four squadrons: the first under Commodore Truxtun at St. Christophers, the third under Commodore Tingey stationed in the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti and the fourth under Commodore Stephen Decatur on the north coast of Cuba.

In the Summer of 1798 Congress had passed an act to prohibit trade with France "and the dependencies there of", but provided that, "if...the government of France, and all persons acting by or under their authority, shall clearly disavow, and shall be found to refrain from...agressions, depredations and hostilities...it shall be lawful for the President of the United States... to remit and discontinue the prohibitions and restraints hereby enacted."[9] This act bore with some severity on Toussaint Louverture in Saint-Domingue, who was dependent on the United States, certainly for provisions, and probably for arms, as one writer speaking of the revolted slaves intimated: "But it grieves me to add, that the rebels were afterwards abundantly supplied by small vessels from North America, the masters of which felt no scruple to receive in payment sugar and rum, from estates of which the owners had been murdered by the men with whom they trafficked."[10]

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8 Ibid., 112.

9 Act of Congress of June 13, 1798 in Documents Relating to the Controversy over Neutral Rights, 61-62.

10 Bryan Edwards, Historical Survey of the French Colony of St. Domingo, John Stockdale, London, 1881, III, 82.

Though trade with Saint-Domingue was not legal, authorities were quite aware that it existed, as is evident from a report of the Secretary of State:

> Sir, agreeably to your request I have the honor to inform you, that in August 1797 the United States Brigantine Sophia was sent to the West Indies, to collect and bring home such American Seamen as should be found destitute of the means of returning. She visited Guadaloupe, Porto Rico, St. Domingo, and Cuba: but found such destitute seamen only at Porto Rico, from which she brought upwards of ninety to St. Domingo, where many American vessels wanting hands, they were distributed among them; four only being brought home in the Sophia,[11]

The following is also an interesting comment on the illegal trade with Saint-Domingue:

> I beg Leave to add an Observation to shew, that the Renewal of the Commerce has now become not only an Act of Policy, but also a Measure of Necessity notwithstanding the vigorous Laws enacted in America, to prevent Vessels from sailing to French Ports, and the Vigilance of American Cruisers, the Flag of the united States is seen as frequently in every Port of this Colony, as it was before the prohibitory Act was passed.[12]

Apparently though, Toussaint had not been satisfied with the supplies received in this way, for he sent this message to a Philadelphia merchant early in January, 1799:

> I did not wait till this day to feel the necessity there is for the Island of St. Domingo to form again bonds of friendship and good understanding with the United States, such as that friendship and good understanding so happily existed between the two countries whose mutual prosperity required they should never have been destroyed. This opinion of mine I have sufficiently evinced by sending to the Federal Government persons in whom I put my confidence and whose mission was to restore that good harmony that prevailed before.....

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11 Knox, Naval Documents, I, 113.

12 Ibid., III, 127.

> With a design to make you easy about what is the object of your hopes and fears, I do again promise you, upon my word which was always a good one, and which I always held sacred, that such American vessels fitted for St. Domingo as shall enter our Ports, shall be heartily welcome, favoured and protected, that no restraint shall be put upon their trade and finally that when they come among us they shall find that they are among a friendly and brotherly people.[13]

Toussaint thought that Bunel, his agent, "The trusty person whom you invite me to send over, in order to negotiate about these momentous concerns...has by this time reached America."[14] By the end of February, Bunel had been allowed an interview with President Adams as we learn from the Secretary of State:

> Mr. Bunel who delivered me a letter from General Toussaint [sic] to the President of the United States, requesting that a commercial intercourse between them and St. Domingo might be opened, desired the favor of seeing the President, and he saw him.[15]

The United States was as ready as Toussaint Louverture to be on friendly terms. Earlier in January, Barry had been thus directed by Secretary Stoddert:

> It is very much the wish of the President that you should take some occasion before your return to shew yourself, with the greatest part of the Fleet at Cape Francois, to Genl. Toussaint, who has a great desire to see some Ships of War belonging to America - but it is not intended, that you should sacrifice any important object to gratify this general; with whom however, if it should fall in your way, it may be well for you to cultivate a good understanding.[16]

The same day similar instructions were issued to Truxtun.[17] Before

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13 Ibid., II, 216.

14 Ibid.,

15 Ibid., 373.

16 Ibid., Letter to Captain John Barry from the Secretary of the Navy, January 16, 1799, II, 242.

17 Ibid., 243.

General Maitland arrived in the United States to act for the British in arranging the terms of a joint commercial treaty with Toussaint, the United States had already sent to Cap François, Dr. Stevens, a relative of Hamilton's as Consul-General. He landed at Cap François the eighteenth of April and proceeded at once to come to terms with Toussaint whom he found willing to persuade the Commissioner of the Directory, Roume, when necessary:

> I endeavored, as well as I was able, to obviate all the Objections which were urged by the particular Agent against the Terms required by the government of the United States. In this attempt I met with powerful Support from the General in Chief. His Penetration and good Sense enabled him to see the Justice and Propriety of the President's Demands, and, after a very lengthy conversation, the particular Agent himself was convinced that Nothing was asked but what was conducive to the Prosperity of the Colony.[18]

The first four articles of the secret convention which Toussaint had previously signed with General Maitland in August, 1798 had partaken more of the nature of an armed truce than of a commercial treaty as they provided that: first, General Maitland promised not to attack St. Domingue; second, Toussaint made the same promise with regard to Jamaica; third, Maitland promised that his government would not interfere with the internal affairs of Saint-Domingue; fourth, Toussaint promised also that he would not interfere in the politics and government of Jamaica. These four provisions were to be in effect only for the duration of the war. By the fifth article, however, Great Britain pledged "A quantity of provisions which will be later determined...and the value of these provisions will be paid for in colonial products...[19]

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18 Ibid., Letter from Stevens to Pickering, May 3, 1799, III, 123.

19 Rayford W. Logan, The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, 1776-1891, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1941, 65-66. The legend that Maitland offered Toussaint a crown seems, in the light of recent research on that subject, to be ill-founded. See Logan, 64.

In 1799, the British, though they wished to participate in the island's trade on equal terms with the United States, were still more concerned to protect Jamaica and their other West India islands, "which it was considered would be endangered by an unrestrained intercourse with St. Domingo."[20] Maitland therefore insisted with Pickering that it would be "essential...to confine the commerce to one or two Ports."[21] Pickering acquiesced though there were drawbacks to this arrangement. But these were outweighed by the disadvantages Maitland predicted from "existing orders to British cruisers on that station which might occasion vexations and injurious interruptions to our vessels destined for St. Domingo..."[22] Pickering was, therefore, careful to instruct Stevens:

> When all arrangements shall have been made by General Toussaint, to General Maitland's and your satisfaction, General Maitland will send information thereof to the British Admiral and officers on that station. This is a measure of too much importance to us to be omitted, and it will be well for you to remind him of it.[23]

General Maitland was the bearer of this letter to Stevens explaining the terms of cooperation agreed on at Philadelphia. Besides a restriction on the number of ports to be opened the British had also obtained a delay in the time of the "renewal of the commerce [which Pickering had hoped to begin]

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20 Letter of Pickering to Stevens, April 20, 1799, Knox, Naval Documents, III, 70.

21 Ibid., 71.

22 Letter of Pickering to King, April 22, 1799, in Charles R. King, Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1896, III, 6.

23 Pickering to Stevens, Knox, Naval Documents, III, 72.

perhaps two or three weeks sooner...knowing that our merchants were on tip-toe to recommence that trade."[24]

Before Maitland's arrival, however, Stevens had already worked out some terms of agreement with Toussaint; the most important of these were the regulations to restrain French privateers and to aid American ships in the West Indies:

> Article 1st: The most effectual Means have been used to call in the Privateers of this colony, & annul their Commissions. And I can assure you, with Confidence, that methods equally effectual, will be taken to prevent them from being renewed.....
> Article 3rd: The armed Vessels of the United States, both public, & private, as well as mere Merchant Vessels, will be permitted freely to enter the Ports of the Island to victual, water and refit, and will in all Respects be received, and treated as Friends.[25]

Toussaint did not agree at once entirely to forbid his harbors to all French privateers.

> I urged very strongly the necessity of excluding from the ports of St. Domingo all French armed Vessels commissioned elsewhere; but it was thought impolitic to insert such an article in a Public Instrument, which allowed a permission of entering these Ports, to the armed Vessels of America. There was no hesitation, however, in privately granting what I desired. Orders have in consequences been given to suffer no French armed Vessels, to come into the Ports of the Colony except under circumstances, which would induce any civilized Nation, to afford them an asylum, such as stress of weather, want of Provisions, etc. etc. etc. And it is stipulated, that even in such circumstances, they shall not remain in Port a moment longer than is necessary and that great care shall be taken to prevent them from doing any Mischief to Neutral Commerce."[26]

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24 Pickering to King, Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, III, 6.

25 "Letters of Toussaint Louverture and Edward Stevens, 1798-1800," Franklin J. Jameson, Editor, American Historical Review. 1910, XVI, 70.

26 Ibid., 71.

Pickering's reply to this was that Toussaint's private assurances would not be enough, that something more formal must be obtained. He was pleased, though, that Toussaint's wishes and Anglo-American policy coincided on a feasible plan of regulating trade.

> It is remarkable that General Toussaint should desire the ports of Cape François and Port-au-Prince, alone to be opened to our commerce in the first instance, and that our vessels should there receive passports to go to the other ports - within Toussaint's jurisdiction. This is precisely the arrangement formed here with General Maitland...[27]

This was not really so remarkable. Toussaint's intention was to cut off supplies thus from Rigaud, a mulatto chief in command of the southern section of the island, whom he expected to rebel. When Maitland arrived at Saint-Domingue, he approved the articles that Stevens and Toussaint had already drawn up and the treaty was finally signed by him, not by Stevens, in spite of the fact that Toussaint was still very cool to the British. Maitland, on his arrival had asked Stevens to come out to the ship to talk to him as he was "prevented from landing at the Cape for particular Reasons."[28] Even after making this second agreement with the British, Toussaint refused to receive the British representative, Colonel Grant.[29]

This attitude of Toussaint was not, of course, dictated by mere caprice. His negotiations with the British were the occasion if not the cause, of serious difficulties in his administration. In reporting to Pickering the

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27 Letter from Pickering to Adams, May 29, 1799, Knox, Naval Documents, III, 272.

28 Ibid., Maitland to Stevens, May 14, 1799, III, 183.

29 Ibid., Maitland to Stevens, May 23, 1799, III, 237.

commencement of hostilities with Rigaud Stevens says,

> 'Tho' the Dissention between these Chiefs is of an old Date..., yet I do not imagine that the Explosion would have taken place so soon, had it not been for the circumstances that have recently occurred. The publication of General Maitland's Treaty at the Mole, and the many injudicious paragraphs that were inserted in The english papers gave an air of Plausibility to a Tale, which Rigaud studiously propagated, that the Colony of St. Domingo was to be sold to the british Government, and once more brought under the Yoke of Slavery. But when the H.M.S. Camilla appeared off the Cape and the British officers were seen landing in their Uniforms, even, the Friends of Toussaint were stagger'd....The secret Conference of General Maitland with Toussaint...excited suspicions...and added a Force to the insinuations of his Enemies. Mutiny, Desertion & Treachery were the immediate effects...My efforts in favor of the british Interests will become more difficult....You may be assured, however, Sir, that I shall not omit anything that lays in my Power to promote the joint Interests of both Countries.[30]

Maitland thought the Benefits of the Anglo-American treaty with Toussaint would "entirely rest with the Americans."[31] He did not in consequence give enthusiastic aid to Toussaint against Rigaud. His policy was to keep conditions in the island unsettled and prolong the conflict between Toussaint and Rigaud.[32] For this purpose he ordered the Governor of Jamaica to send supplies of food, one hundred barrels of gunpowder, two hundred stand of arms, and "a few Flints" to Toussaint. He also wrote to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker asking for a blockade of Rigaud's ports.[33] This may have been inspired by

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30 Ibid., Stevens to Pickering, June 24, 1799, III, 391-392.

31 Charles Callan Tansill, United States and Santo Domingo. A Chapter in Caribbean Diplomacy 1798-1873, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1938, 63.

32 Ibid., 66.

33 Ibid., 67.

the intelligence he had received through Stevens of Rigaud's intention to invade Jamaica.

> During my residence at the Cape, last year, I was informed, by a black Chief in the Confidence of General Hedouville, that the Agency of Saint Domingo had received positive Orders from the Executive Directory to invade both the Southern States of America and the Island of Jamaica. Genl. Toussaint was consulted on the best Mode of making the Attack, but having enter'd into a Convention with you to refrain from all Military Expeditions against Jamaica he strenuously opposed this invasion. Finding that Toussaint was inflexible, Hedouville turned his Attention towards Rigaud, whom he nominated to carry this Business into execution. His sudden and unexpected Departure, however, put an immediate stop to the Preparations which had been commenced.... He is, at present at the Head of 10,000 men and has sent down a white Emissary to excite the Negroes in Jamaica to revolt and be ready to join him at his Arrival.[34]

The fear of invasion from the French islands and a slave insurrection such as had occurred in Saint-Domingue was not peculiar to the British. It was shared by some Americans, not merely those of a timid variety, either. Washington thought that if a French invasion of the United States were attempted it would be directed against the South. "There can be no doubt of their arming our own Negroes against us."[35] After quoting Washington, Gibbs goes on to say:

> It is not a little remarkable that, among the motives to an increase of the military force of the country at this time, the fear of servile insurrection should have been so entirely forgotten. Such an occurrence though not a matter for public discussion, was well considered at the time.[36]

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34 Knox, Naval Documents, III, 236-237. (Whether the Jamaica plot was genuine or not, this letter had the desired effects.)

35 George Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administration of Washington and John Adams, printed for the subscribers, N. Y., 1846, II, 60.

36 Ibid.

In 1798 Adams had received a letter from Henry Knox, former Secretary of War under Washington, expressing his fears of a French invasion and a Negro insurrection. "The event is possible, and whatever is possible the enemy will have the enterprise to attempt."[37] Later Stevens sent Pickering a copy of the same plan of invasion which he had described in a previous letter to Maitland.[38]

The fears of the Americans and the British were the same respecting the machinations of the French Republic and a Negro insurrection, but their policies with regard to Toussaint were different. The British policy was, as we have seen, at one with the French in this instance for Stevens describes it thus to Pickering:

> I hinted to you, some time ago, my suspicion that Rigaud was privately supported by the french Government, from the cruel Policy of weakening both Mullattoes and Negroes, by fomenting and keeping up a Contest between them. Everyday confirms me more in this opinion, and I have now no doubt that the Agent is the secret and diabolical Instrument employed by them for this Purpose.[39]

Stevens considered this a contest between two rival chiefs:

> The one proud, haughty, cruel....agitated by a restless ambition, [and he] views with impatience a Negro at the Head of Affairs and in Possession of that Power, which he thinks is due to his superior Talent. The other more mild and humane thinks that the interests of human nature require this Man to be deposed, and that the Authority he himself possesses is justly merited by the Services he has rendered to the Colony. Both wish to reign, but by different means, and with differing views. Rigaud would deluge the Country with Blood to accomplish this favorite Point and slaughter indiscriminately whites, blacks and even the leading Chiefs of his own Colour. - The acquisition of Power, with him is only desirable

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37 Knox, Naval Documents, I, 140-141.

38 "Letters of Toussaint Louverture and Edward Stevens," 82.

39 Knox, Naval Documents, III, 390.

> because it would enable him to indulge without restraint, his cruel and sanguinary Passions. Toussaint, on the contrary, is desirous of being confirmed in his Authority by the united Efforts of all the inhabitants, whose Friend and Protector he wishes to be considered, and, I am convinced, were his Power uncontroled he wd. exercise it in protecting Commerce, encouraging Agriculture and establishing useful Regulations for the internal Government of the Colony.[40]

Naturally, argued Stevens, Toussaint should be supported by the United States. He was not only the better man, he was the stronger.

> Toussaint runs no Risk from open Force. He is too powerful. His only danger is from internal Treason....It will readily occur to you, Sir, that if Toussaint should prove unsuccessful, all the arrangements we have made respecting Commerce must fall to the Ground. The most solemn Treaty would have little weight with a man of Rigaud's capricious and tyrannical Temper. This circumstance points out the absolute Necessity of supporting Toussaint by every Legal Measure....it might be prudent to direct some of the American Ships of War to cruise on the South side of the Island, and about Jeremie, in order, that they might cooperate with the British in cutting off al[l] supplies and Provisions and Ammunition.[41]

This letter is particularly interesting in the light of after events. His observation of the danger to Toussaint of treason, and the failure of any treaty should Toussaint Louverture fall were in the nature of a prophecy. The line of action Stevens pointed out of trusting Toussaint and building him up was sound and successful as long as it was followed, and for the moment it was. President John Adams issued a proclamation June 26, 1799, renewing trade with specified ports of Saint-Domingue, as he had been empowered by Congress to do in the act prohibiting commercial intercourse between the United States and the dependencies of France.[42] The date set for the opening of the ports

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40 Ibid., 391.

41 Ibid., 392-393.

42 Ibid., 408-409.

to trade was August first, and so eager were the merchants to engage in it, that when the Secretary of the Navy sent Captain Little of the Boston to Saint-Domingue in July he "calculated" his "instructions so that he is not to know his destination, until he leaves Boston lest others might avail themselves before their time of the knowledge of these ports being opened." Secretary Stoddert expected that, "Our Merchant Vessels will be flocking in great numbers to these ports....Your object [to Captain Little] must be to protect them by all the means in your power."[43] At the end of July, Talbot was ordered to the command of the squadron stationed at Cap François and "to cultivate and preserve a Good Understanding with General Toussaint."[44]

President Adams had allowed the ship which took Stevens to the Cap to carry food and clothing for Toussaint's army, though both he and the Attorney-General, differing in this opinion from the rest of the Cabinet, considered the action illegal.[45] Pickering informed Toussaint, through Stevens, that it was still against the laws of the United States to export arms to him even after the opening of the ports. However, he thought Toussaint could get what he needed from the British, who had offered to sell the United States some ammunition, which it did not need "except the brass artillery, & we can do without that."[46] Later some of Rigaud's barges attacked an American schooner, the Experiment, in the Bight of Leogane, and were repulsed after killing the captain of one of the merchant ships in her convoy, but succeeded in capturing

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43 Ibid., 451-452.

44 Ibid., 553.

45 Ibid., IV, 415-416.

46 Ibid., 157-158.

and carrying off two others.[47] After this, Commodore Talbot had the vicinity guarded by a frigate, and Jacmel was forced to surrender to Toussaint in February "largely due to the spirited bombardment of the forts by the frigate General Green, Captain Perry, while the town was closely invested from the land side by Toussaint."[48]

Stevens, Talbot and Perry seem to have entered wholeheartedly into the war against Rigaud. Toussaint wrote:

> I have read with great satisfaction your letter and his [Talbot's] and there was no need of your giving me greater proof of the interest which you take in me, in this circumstance than to assure me of it yourself, and you need not even assure me of it, since you have plainly demonstrated it to me by deeds. I could not be more grateful to you than I am for all the trouble to which you have gone...to give me succor with ships in the waters around Jacmel.[49]

The British were not so enthusiastic in their support of Toussaint Louverture, and Stevens, Talbot and Toussaint were obliged to go to some trouble to circumvent them (and the laws of the United States), in sending provisions to the captured city. However Talbot devised a means of relieving it by taking Toussaint's supply vessels under the guard of his own ship the Constitution, as though they were his prizes: "I hardly think, that any British Armed Vessel will attempt to examine those Vessels, if accompanied by the Constitution."[50] A month later Toussaint was writing him this letter of thanks:

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47 Ibid., V, 1-6.

48 Knox, History of the United States Navy, 51.

49 Letter from Toussaint Louverture to Stevens, March 16, 1800, Knox, Naval Documents, V, 310.

50 Ibid., 349-350, 355.

> You inform me, and I learn it with joy, that you have given orders to the ship Herald, of twenty guns, to join the brig Augusta and the schooner Experiment. I am infinitely obliged for so much honorable proceeding from you, and I shall never forget it....You flatter me with the hope that you are going shortly to send the Boston frigate of thirty-two guns; may you soon be able to realize it; God grant likewise to favor my expectation.[51]

Though Talbot himself cooperated with alacrity to help Toussaint he was decidedly annoyed with his subordinate Captain Perry for delaying twenty days in port for two passengers Toussaint wished to send to the United States, and thought it "incompatible with good dicipline [sic] ...that a request from Toussaint should be listened to and obey'd, in preference to my Orders to proceed to Sea immediately and at all events!"[52] At his recall in May he was told that "your temperate and judicious conduct on your Station has given great satisfaction to the President and your country."[53]

His successor Captain Murray was instructed to be temperate also:

> You cannot be too attentive to the cultivation of a good understanding between Genl. Touissant [sic] & the people under his command but interfere no further than the safety of the American Commerce requires, in the civil war, raging in the Island.[54]

The United States' active support of Toussaint Louverture continued until his capture of Jeremie and the complete defeat of Rigaud who was captured in his flight from Saint-Domingue and paroled by Truxton.[55] By

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51 Ibid., 391.

52 Ibid., 458, See also 457-460.

53 Ibid., 510.

54 Ibid., 391.

55 Ibid., 427.

Rigaud's fall Toussaint became master of all the French part of the island of Saint-Domingue, and Adams in September 1800, issued a proclamation opening all Toussaint's ports to American commerce.[56]

In the meantime Stevens had inquired of the State Department as to what line of conduct he should follow, when, as he expected, Toussaint should declare the colony independent of France.

> The agent's conduct has displeased him so much, particularly in a late Transaction, that I am convinced he will not long possess even the appearance of Power. As soon as Jachamel is captured, he will be reduced to a Cipher. Some written permanent arrangements may then be made, which may place our intercourse with this colony on a more favorable Footing. I must, therefore, beg the favor of you, Sir, to give me your instructions on this Subject, as early as possible, and direct me whether it is the Wish of the President that any Alteration should be made in the Existing Regulations with this Colony. I foresee that a new order of things will shortly take Place here & should wish to be prepared for the event.[57]

However, opinions were divided as to the desirability of Toussaint's proclaiming independence. The British were not in favor of it; Grenville had been horrified at the idea of an independent black republic.[58] At the time Stevens was sent to Saint-Domingue, Pickering, apparently, was not averse to it, though he refused to admit that the United States was trying to bring it about:

> It is not, however, to be denied that, nor have we aimed at any concealment, that we have strong expectations that Toussaint will declare the Island independent. Unquestionably he has long

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56 Logan, 110.

57 "Letters of Toussaint Louverture and Edward Stevens," Jameson, 90.

58 J. A. James, "French Opinion as a Factor in Preventing War between France and the United States, 1795-1800." American Historical Review, 1924, XXX, 50-51.

> contemplated that event. But it is absolutely false, what Hedouville declared in his last Proclamation, that the United States had intrigued with Great Britain to bring him into that measure. We have, in fact, not intermeddled in any manner whatever in the political affairs of St. Domingo. If Toussaint declares independency, it will not be owing to the intrigues, nor the advice, nor even the suggestion of the United States. It will be his own act.[59]

The subject was debated in Congress where Pinckney

> denied that the independence of St. Domingo was more to be apprehended by the Southern States, than their continuance under the dominion of France. If free, we might treat with them and secure their good conduct. If subject to France and supported by her Navy, she might thence accomplish the invasion with which her unofficial agents had menaced our envoys. If free, Great Britain would monopolize their commerce, or they must become free-booters on our commerce, or seek supplies from us. Is it not our interest to encourage them in their habits of industry - to render them peaceful cultivators of the soil?[60]

As we saw in a previous chapter, Hamilton, whose opinion was powerful in Federalist councils, was in favor of the independence of Saint-Domingue as part of a larger scheme, that of revolutionizing the French West Indies and South America. With regard merely to relations with Toussaint he wrote:

> in this, my dear sir, as in everything else, we must unite caution with decision. The United States must not be committed on the independence of St. Domingo - no guarantee - no formal treaty - nothing that will rise up in judgment. It will be enough to let Toussaint be assured verbally, but explicitly, that upon his declaration of independence, a commercial intercourse will be opened: and continue while he maintains it and gives due protection to our rights and property. I incline to think the declaration of independence ought to precede.[61]

In Holland, Vans Murray, the Federal representative at the Hague

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59 Pickering to King. Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, III, 7.

60 John C. Hamilton, History of the Republic of the United States of America as traced in the writings of Alexander Hamilton and His Contemporaries Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1868, VII, 240.

61 Ibid., 307.

expected a declaration of independence.

> The story of St. Domingo's independence seems to me to gain in credibility, and they seem willing to prepare the public mind at Paris for the event, as they publish extracts from Volney's Travels in Egypt and Syria, to prove that with Egypt, which produces all things indeed, they can do without the colonies![62]

Stevens at Cap François wrote in the spring of 1800 with obvious enthusiasm:

> While I was uncertain of the real Intentions of Toussaint, I was loth [sic] to say anything to you about them. Now that I think I know them, it is my Duty to announce them to you. He is taking his measures slowly but securely. All connection with France will soon be broken off. If he is not disturbed he will preserve appearances a little longer. But as soon as France interferes with this colony he will throw off the mask and declare it independent....
>
> He will accept of the unanimous Invitation of the Colony, and from that Moment it may be considered as forever separated from France. Policy, perhaps, may induce him to make no open Declaration of Independence, before he is compelled. But this Apparent and temporary Attachment to the Mother Country will only ensure the separation of the Colony more effectually.[63]

Yet a month later he was writing again to Pickering on this subject, "I would wish to have your instructions how to proceed."[64] The reason why he was not encouraged was that President Adams had agreed with great reluctance to the Pickering-Maitland plan. The previous September he had written to the Secretary of the Navy, "I wish as you do that the trade of St. Domingo may turn out to be worth the cost. To speak in the style of a Frenchman I have never felt any very sublime enthusiasm on that subject....

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62 "Letters of William Vans Murray," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1912, 457.

63 Stevens to Pickering, Feb. 13, 1800 and April 19, 1800 in "Letters of Toussaint Louverture and Edward Stevens," 93-96.

64 Ibid., 100.

Toussaint's armed vessels with Dr. Steven's passport! What can they be cruising for in the Bite?"[65] He was not enthusiastic on the subject of Saint-Domingue independence either.

> The result of the whole is in my mind problematical and precarious. Toussaint has evidently puzzled himself, the French Government, the English Cabinet and the Administration of the United States. All the rest of the World knows as little what to do with him as he knows what to do with himself.[66]

Oddly enough, this is about the way the Federalist leaders felt about John Adams himself. Their attitude is reflected in the following censure on his conduct by a later writer: "It was among the extraordinary inconsistencies of Adams that, while he appointed a minister to France to negotiate an accommodation with her, he should have sent an agent to Toussaint to encourage the independence of St. Domingo."[67] In fact it did not even seem honest, as Hamilton put it at the time, "How is the sending of an agent to Toussaint to encourage the independency of St. Domingo, and a minister to France to negotiate an accommodation, reconcilable to consistency or good faith?"[68]

It was unfair, however, to charge Adams with a sudden about face in policy, as he had thought "independence the worst and most dangerous condition [the West Indies] can be in for the United States."[69] The independence

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65 Knox, Naval Documents, IV, 168.

66 Adams to Pickering, July 2, 1799, Knox, Naval Documents, III, 453.

67 Hamilton, History of the Republic of the United States, 307.

68 Ibid., Letter of Alexander Hamilton, Feb. 21, 1799.

69 Adams to Pickering, Aprul 7, 1799, Works of John Adams, VIII, 634.

policy had really been pursued by his cabinet, and they opposed the sending of representatives to France.[70] The outcome, too, was so uncertain that the fleet was kept in the West Indies and Talbot instructed, "You will as hereafter cultivate a good understanding with Genl. Toussaint & the people of St. Domingo."[71]

Under the circumstances it would seem that Toussaint is the one who could have justly complained that Adams, not he, puzzled himself and everyone else. Why did not Toussaint declare his independence? The reason may be that he saw that he was not yet strong enough to challenge the power of France alone. Surely the following conjecture is wide of the mark. There is little evidence that Toussaint was so sentimental as this:

> The decree of the 16th Pluviose had marked in his mind the beginning of a new era for all French blacks. His experience of French commissioners, his fears for his people, his hard sense of reality had driven him along the road of independence. But there was a limit beyond which he could not go. He had a profound conviction that the French could never restore slavery in S. Domingo and he falsely believed that, once the means of defending liberty for all were safeguarded, no sacrifice was too great to make the French see reason.[72]

As Toussaint did not declare independence, and left no statement as to why he did not, we can only judge of what his intentions were by his actions. Yet Stevens said the news of Morfontaine struck Toussaint like a thunderbolt.[73] Even after the ratification by the United States Senate of

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70 Ibid., IX, 25.

71 Knox, Naval Documents, VI, 536.

72 C. L. R. James, The Black Jacobins, Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution, Dial Press, New York, 1938, 301.

73 Logan, 112.

the Treaty of Morfontaine which put an end to hostilities between the United States and France, he continued to govern in such an independent way that the authorities of France and the United States thought he was aiming at independence. He conquered the Spanish section of the island against the wishes of France, promulgated a new constitution, and imported large quantities of arms and ammunition from the United States.[74] Events in the United States, however, effects of Morfontaine, and in France and Britain, effects of the Peace of Amiens, hindered him, and made it necessary for him to acknowledge nominal French control. These effects will be discussed in another chapter. The best conclusion, that has been offered, perhaps on the problem of Toussaint's intentions with regard to independence is that of Logan, "I believe that he planned independence, but that the signing of peace between France and Britain was the coup de grace as Morfontaine had been the coup de foudre."[75]

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74 Ibid., 113-116.

75 Ibid., 117.

CHAPTER V

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE AND SAINT-DOMINGUE

1801-1803

Whether the Treaty of Amiens was the coup de grace for Toussaint or not, Morfontaine was for the Federalist party. Made in the face of the opposition of leading Federalists it ended the career as President of John Adams. It widened the division between factions of the Federalist party and contributed to the victory of the Republicans in the presidential election of that year. The advent to power of the party of Thomas Jefferson ended the influence of the Federalists on foreign policy for some time. It was Republican support that got the treaty ratified by the Senate.[1] There is evidence, even, that conciliation had been suggested to Talleyrand, then foreign Minister of France, through Victor DuPont by Jefferson, who assured DuPont that in such an event his party, more friendly to France than the Federalists, would be victorious in the next elections.[2]

Immediately after the ratification of the Treaty of Morfontaine by the Senate, February 3, 1801, orders were given to recall the squadrons from the West Indies.[3] Adams' fear that the protection of the Saint-Domingue trade

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1 Ludwell Lee Montague, Haiti and the United States 1714-1938, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1940, 41.

2 J. A. James, "French Opinion as a Factor in Preventing War between France and the United States, 1795-1800," American Historical Review, XXX, 53.

3 Gardner W. Allen, Our Naval War with France, Houghton Mifflin, N.Y., 1909, 221.

might not be worth the cost apparently was not justified.

> The whole cost of the American navy from 1794 to the return of the ships to port in the spring of 1801 was about ten million dollars, of which six million may be taken as a fair estimate of the actual expense of protecting American commerce against French depradation. During the years 1798 to 1800 inclusive the value of the exports from the United States thus protected was over two hundred million dollars, and the revenue derived from imports was more than twenty-two million dollars.[4]

In the year 1800 American exports to Saint-Domingue were valued at $5,123,000, more than double the estimated figure for 1790, and about the same as that for 1797.[5] Otto reported to Talleyrand that "while the Americans do not at present possess a navy, they are undoubtedly the greatest navigators of the earth.... More than 600 vessels are required annually to carry on their trade with Santo Domingo alone."[6]

Naturally this great volume of trade was possible only because of the prosperity of the island, and the flourishing state of Saint-Domingue was owing to the strong and wise government of Toussaint Louverture. The claim is even made that in one year after he took over the government of the country, exhausted by ten years of civil war, he brought the public revenues up to two-thirds of what they were in the most prosperous years of the colonial regime after long years of peace.[7] In fact, he was able to raise more money because he straightened out the complicated commercial system of the

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4 Ibid., 222.

5 Montague, 47.

6 James, 47.

7 A. Nemours, Histoire Militaire de la Guerre d'Indépendance de Saint-Domingue, Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1925, I, 17-18.

old colonial administration.[8] He may have been a bit arbitrary, but he seems to have been what the colony needed. Also "it is necessary to refute the error which consisted in saying that under the reign of Toussaint Louverture the lot of the cultivators was more miserable than ever. Nothing could be more inexact."[9] The fact is that the rulers of Saint-Domingue, both before and those immediately after Toussaint, worked them much harder and gave less in return. Toussaint took a personal interest in their well being and advancement. They trusted him as did also the upper classes. His reiterated aim was to restore order, tranquility, prosperity, to the whole island, and he was in a fair way to achieve it. After his conquest of the Spanish section of the island in January 1801, from March to May Toussaint employed a commission of ten members from different parts of the island in drawing up a civil constitution which was proclaimed in July of that year.[10] He himself was to be governor-general for life. It was not democratic, though he used some of the forms of democracy, yet it was undoubtedly the best form of government for Saint Domingue at that time. Even so ardent a republican as President Jefferson thought that it was.[11]

Why, then, did Napoleon decide to remove Toussaint by force of arms? The fact that Toussaint seemed to be aiming at independence was certainly one reason, though Nemours says that the expedition was decided on before the

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8 Ibid., 81, 82.

9 Ibid., 72-73.

10 Ibid., 94-95.

11 Rayford W. Logan, The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti,1776-1891, University of North Carolina Press,Chapel Hill,1941,125.

First Consul received Toussaint's Constitution.[12] Reasons of strategy may have had something to do with it, but it was not undertaken just to get Moreau and his troops away from France. Neither was it planned merely to please Josephine.[13] The important object of the projected reconquest, Nemours thinks, was the restoration of slavery in the colony.[14] That was, as a matter of fact, one of his purposes but merely an auxiliary to a more important one - that of taking possession of Louisiana.

The reoccupation of Louisiana had been an object of French policy since the American Revolution. Though her openly avowed end in engaging in the war was that of weakening the power of Great Britain, which it was always in her interest to lessen wherever possible, her secret aims, which she disavowed in her Treaty of "Amity and Alliance" with the United States in 1778, were to "render the United States subservient to France and to rebuild French power in the interior of North America."[15] By the treaty of 1778 France had agreed not to reclaim her territory of Louisiana which she had ceded to Spain rather than allow it to fall to Great Britain with her other colonies in 1763. Yet that she would be able to recover her former colonies had been all along one of the secret aims of Vergennes, Louis XVI's Foreign Minister, as set forth by him in a memorandum prepared apparently for the information and guidance of his sovereign:

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12 Nemours, 5.

13 Ibid., 1-2.

14 Ibid., 3-4.

15 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Policy of France toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams," American Historical Review, X, 249.

> No matter which side wins in the war between the English and the Americans, this revolution will not be ended without powerful belligerent nations of Europe interfering in the quarrel or at least serving as mediators. In either event a general congress [i.e. of powers] will be able to change the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles....and supposing the United Provinces of America to be separated from their mother-country, France will be in a position to recover her former possessions.....
>
> England will be obliged to restore to France all the conquests which she made in North America during the last war [i.e. the French and Indian War.][16]

France wished to recover Louisiana not only in order to be in a position to support her colonies in the West Indies with food, but also by controlling the Mississippi Valley, directly or through allied Indian States, to prevent the expansion of the former English colonies, bound them with the Alleghenies, and use her position to make the United States serve French interests. To this end, during the American Revolution she supported Spanish claims to the lands west of the Allegheny Mountains and tried to get Congress to give up claims to them.[17] Out-manoeuvred in the attempt to recover Louisiana by the Treaty of Ghent, Vergennes did not give up his plan, but merely put it aside and awaited the next good opportunity. Before it came, he died in 1787, but his policy was faithfully followed not only by his successors in the foreign office, whether royalist, republican or imperial, but also by their representatives in Washington. Fauchet, faced with the problems created by the Negro insurrection in the West Indies and by Jay's Treaty, urged that the

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16 Charles Gravier, Compte de Vergennes, Mémoire Historique et Politique sur la Louisiane, etc., Lepetit Jeune, Paris, 1802, 103-108.

17 Turner, 249-253.

possession of Louisiana would enable France to put pressure on the United States.[18] Unsuccessful in the effort to secure the retrocession of Louisiana by the Treaty of Basel in 1795, the French ministers kept on trying.[19] Talleyrand secured it finally by the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso signed on October 1, 1800, exactly one day after the preliminaries of the Treaty of Monfontaine had been signed with the United States on September 30, 1800. In other words, he made peace with us one day, and began preparations for war the next.

The retrocession of Louisiana was, however, kept secret as long as possible. Not only Washington, Hamilton and the Federalists, but friends of France, such as Jefferson, opposed the French occupation of that territory. In fact, they regarded their possession of it as sufficient cause for war. Jefferson was later to write:

> The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France works most sorely on the United States....We have ever looked to her [France] as our natural friend....[However] there is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market..... circumstances render it impossible that France and the United States can continue long friends, when they meet in so irritable a position. They...must be blind if they do not see this....The day that France takes possession of New Orleans fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water mark. It seals the union of two nations, who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment, we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation. We must turn all our attention to a maritime force, for which our resources place us on very high ground; and having formed and connected together a power which may render reinforcement of her settlements here impossible to France

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18 Ibid., 266.

19 Ibid., 267-277.

> make the first cannon which shall be fired in Europe the signal for holding the two continents of America in sequestration for the common purposes of the United British and American nations.[20]

If this represented Jefferson's attitude on the subject of the retrocession, why did he encourage, or appear to encourage the French reconquest of Saint-Domingue? There is no evidence that Jefferson bore any personal ill-will to Toussaint or to the Negro race. Napoleon, perhaps, had notions about white supremacy, as Logan concludes.[21] Jefferson, on the contrary, though he might have impractical plans for their welfare, was at least interested in it, as is shown by a reference to this very period:

> Mr. King and his party left for the Continent the middle of August 1802 and returned to London the middle of November. The period was one in which a correspondence with Jefferson occurred regarding transportation of blacks who had shown a spirit of revolt to some Negro colony. Jefferson, whose anti-slavery views are well known, knew that Mr. King entertained similar sentiments and appealed to him for aid in carrying out some plan which, while relieving the country of a disturbing element, might result in benefit to the colored people themselves.[22]

Pichon, French Minister to Washington, might have judged Jefferson differently if he had read the opinion of him expressed by one of his predecessors.

> When French Minister Adet was striving to secure the election of Jefferson to the presidency in 1796, he reported to his government this estimate of Jefferson's character, "I do not know whether, as I am told, we will always find in him a man entirely devoted to our interests. Mr. Jefferson likes us because he detests England; he seeks to unite with us because he suspects us less than Great Britain, but he would change his sentiments towards us tomorrow, perhaps, if tomorrow Great Britain ceased to inspire him with fear.

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20 Letter from Jefferson to Livingstone, U. S. Minister to France, April 18, (1802,) in The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, H. A. Washington, Editor, John Criker, N. Y., 1854, IV, 431-432.

21 Logan, 123.

22 Edwards Hale Brush, Rufus King and His Times, Nicholas L. Brown, N.Y., 1926, 159.

> Jefferson, although a friend of liberty and the sciences, although an admirer of the efforts we have made to break our chains and dissipate the cloud of ignorance which weighs upon mankind, Jefferson, I say, is an American, and by that title, it is impossible for him to be sincerely our friend. An American is the born enemy of European peoples."[23]

That Adet expressed pretty well Jefferson's ideas may be seen from the President's own words in a letter to Dupont de Nemours, April 25, 1802.

> In Europe nothing but Europe is seen or supposed to have any right in the affairs of nations; but this little event of France's possessing herself of Louisiana, which is thrown in as nothing, as a mere make-weight in the general settling of accounts, - this speck which now appears as an almost invisible point in the horizon, is the embryo of a tornado which will burst on the countries on both sides of the Atlantic and involve in its effects their highest destinies.[24]

This letter, of course, was written after Jefferson knew that the retrocession was a fact. Rumors of it had begun to reach him about the time he was inaugurated in March 1801, and by July he learned that Bonaparte intended to recover Saint-Domingue as soon as feasible. Pichon was led to think that Jefferson intended to support the French expedition against Toussaint. He asked the President:

> "If France were in a position to act would it not be possible to arrange a concert with the United States, in order to accomplish more quickly the conquest of the colony?" And the compromising reply came: "Without difficulty; but in order that this concert may be complete and effective you must first make peace with England; then nothing would be easier than to furnish your army and fleet with everything and reduce Toussaint to starvation."[25]

From the context of his despatches, however, and from certain facts mentioned

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23 Turner, 278.

24 Jefferson's Works, IV, 436.

25 Carl Ludwig Lokke, "Jefferson and the Leclerc Expedition," American Historical Review, XXXIII, 324.

by Pichon, such as Madison's refusal to let Pichon see a copy of the instructions sent to Tobias Lear, who had succeeded Stevens as our representative at Cap François, and from Jefferson's actions later, it would seem correct to conclude as does one author: "An astute French diplomat did not catch Jefferson off his guard, as Pichon boasted and Lokke repeats, but rather the roles were reversed, with Jefferson leading Pichon on and learning all he knew of French hopes and intentions."[26] The idea that Jefferson needed to teach Talleyrand and Napoleon the necessity of isolating Toussaint is, besides, an insult to their memories! They planned to isolate him still further, from his own generals, and thus accomplish his overthrow.

Though he wanted them to feel that he was their friend Jefferson never had any intention of helping France regain her colonies. He is said to have once remarked of them: "France enjoys their sovereignty, and we their profit."[27] That was the status quo, and he was quite content with it. Large quantities of arms and ammunition were shipped to Toussaint from America, and Jefferson did nothing about it, though Pichon protested.[28] In the instructions to Lear he

> was warned that an attempt to subdue Toussaint with the moral support of Great Britain was expected, and that the United States awaited the event with great anxiety; but his instructions were simply to do nothing that might offend the French and so far as might be compatible with that, to do nothing to offend the people of the island.[29]

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26 Montague, 42.

27 Turner, 259.

28 Logan, 131-139.

29 Montague, 42.

From the previously quoted passage on that subject it is evident that Jefferson felt that the United States could not wage a successful war with France without the aid of Great Britain. Yet Great Britain had opposed Toussaint's conquest of the Spanish section of Hispaniola.[30] Also Great Britain had been annoyed with the United States because of Morfontaine. Napoleon had her sanction for his expedition, and immediately after the preliminaries, "Before the definitive peace treaty was actually signed, Buonaparte dispatched an immense fleet to the West Indies."[31] Livingstone wrote Jefferson from Paris in December 1801, at the time of the sailing of LeClerc's expedition: I know that the armament destined for Hispaniola is to proceed to Louisiana provided Toussaint makes no opposition."[32] There was nothing very much that Jefferson could do just then except wait and hope that Toussaint Louverture would make opposition.

This is exactly what Toussaint did. Though his preparations were well made, as well as his plan of campaign, his orders were not well carried out except by Dessalines, Christophe and Morpas.[33] He was not overcome, by force of arms, however, but by the treason of his generals.

> Henri Christophe wrote that the measures taken by Toussaint "were responsible for the weak resistance the French met with in

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30 Stevens to Pickering, May 28, 1800, "Letters of Toussaint Louverture and Edward Stevens, 1798-1800," Franklin J. Jameson, Editor, American Historical Review, XVI, 100.

31 John Campbell, Naval History of Great Britain, John Stockdale, London, 1813, VII, 295.

32 Montague, 43.

33 Nemours, I, 194 and II, 252.

Haiti." His opinion is not shared by Generals de Lacroix and Leclerc who had to overcome that resistance. They describe it as exceedingly formidable, especially on the part of the cultivators. If Toussaint's plans went awry it was not due to lukewarmness on the part of the cultivators, but to treason on the part of the generals, of whom Christophe was one of the most guilty.[34]

Christophe was one of the first to betray Toussaint.

> It was obviously to Leclerc's interest to get Christophe to come to an immediate private arrangement with him regarding the army he personally commanded. This would make it difficult for Toussaint to break off negotiations. For Christophe to enter into such a private agreement was of course equivalent to treason. How the man who only a few days before had indignantly repudiated the suggestion that he betray his chief was pursuaded to follow such a course we do not know. The only excuse he ever offered is that "he was tired of living like a savage" and that "circumstances got the better of him." It is possible that he feared Toussaint might change his mind about negotiating a peace with Leclerc and wished to force his hand:-
>
> Christophe was to turn over certain strategic points to the French and was to release 2000 white hostages he was holding. He was to dismiss the armed cultivators with his army and with his 1500 regulars was to join Leclerc's forces. He was to retain his command and most of his other prerogatives.[35]

Dessalines on the contrary has been represented as being in opposition to Toussaint's surrender.[36] However, the fact is that he was bought by the French also, though Toussaint may not have known it. The only prominent general who did not betray Toussaint was his own nephew, Charles Belair.

> Leclerc warily sounded out Dessalines. Skillfully he drew him on with a masterly hand; negotiations were begun, broken off, and taken up again. If an officer may congratulate himself

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34 Ralph Korngold, Citizen Toussaint, Little, Brown, Boston, 1945, 202.

35 Ibid., 288.

36 Thomas Madiou, Histoire de Haiti, Imprimerie, Auguste A. Heraux, Port-au-Prince, 1923, (Republication) II, 233.

> on persuading another to break his word, Leclerc must have been quite happy at getting Dessalines to abandon his leader.
>
> General Christophe, who had brilliantly withstood on the field of battle the offensive of General Hardy, yielded to this one sans honneur.[37]

Their conduct was not the less inexcusable that they deserted Toussaint when he was on the point of winning:

> According to my opinion, founded on facts and on the authority of first rate officers, one is forced to the conclusion that: when Toussaint Louverture conceived his new plan of campaign and gave orders for the second offensive, if he had not been betrayed by his generals, he would have been able to carry out his daring idea of cutting their communications, and having isolated thus the two armies which Leclerc had put under the commands of Hardy and Rochambeau, fall on each one separately and overwhelm them....But in the moment of stress (l'effort,) and success he was abandoned.[38]

This verdict of a modern Haitian army officer is confirmed by that of one of Toussaint's contemporaries, who says Louverture's campaign against Leclerc was going very well, until three of his ranking generals, won by gold and promises, went over to the enemy. The effect on Toussaint was more powerful than that of any army.[39] Though Toussaint's resistance lasted only a few months, and he, taken by treachery, was to die a year later in a French prison, his action had as its consequence the eventual loss of the colony to France.

If anyone profited from Napoleon's expedition to Saint-Domingue it was his inveterate enemies the British. They encouraged him in the idea from

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37 Nemours, 270-271.

38 Ibid., 192.

39 Marcus Rainsford, A Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti, Comprehending a view of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo with its ancient and modern state, James Cundee, London, 1805, 292-293.

the first, knowing by their own recent experience what was likely to happen to his troops. When it did, Lord Whitworth, British Minister at Paris, wrote rejoicing to Lord Hawkesbury, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of:

> that which seems at present to occupy principally the First Consul's attention: I mean the state of things at St. Domingo, where the French army is nearly annihilated, and the Negroes are again in a state of successful insurrection. It becomes, therefore, of the utmost moment to see what may be the measures of the First Consul under these circumstances. Will he persevere in his project of re-establishing a colonial system, or will he turn the whole of his attention to the extension of his dominions and influence on the Continent, and thus, as it is modestly called here, endeavour to keep peace with Great Britain in her acquisition of wealth and power in the East and West Indies? I profess myself too ignorant of the secret springs of this government to be able to form any but very hazardous notions; but if we may now, as on former occasions, calculate on the personal character of the First Consul, we may expect to see him become more desperate and headstrong by opposition, and exert his whole strength and power in the conflict. This certainly is most ardently to be wished.[40]

In a later dispatch he describes Napoleon's preparations to send out thirty thousand reinforcements to Saint-Domingue as quickly as possible and his own contribution to this desirable event,

> From this your Lordship will judge of the importance which the First Consul attaches to his reduction of the colonies; but I think we shall not deceive ourselves if we place this perseverance rather to the account of vanity and offended pride than to any principle of their policy. Whatever may be his motive, I have, whenever an occasion has offered of expressing an opinion on this subject, been particularly careful to express no great degree of anxiety for the measures which he is preparing to adopt in the idea that, should he once be led to imagine that

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40 Whitworth to Hawkesbury, November 20, 1802, in England and Napoleon in 1803 being the Despatches of Lord Whitworth and others, Editor, Oscar Browning. Longmans, London, 1887, 13.

> we consider him as playing our game by this diversion of his force, he might perhaps sacrifice his own feelings to the desire of depriving us of such a gratification. It was with a view to this that when the First Consul introduced the subject in the little conversation, I had with him on Monday last, at the audience, it was my object to dwell on the difficulties of the enterprise than to give him the least reason to believe we wished to commit him, by affecting to diminish the danger. He concluded the conversation by saying "Tout cela est vrai, c'est a ce prix que nous achetons le sûr, mais malgré cela il nous en faut.[41]

Whitworth was glad to see that the United States was disappointing Napoleon:

> The conduct of America, from whose President everything subservient was expected, and by whom it is now foreseen that every opposition will be made to the projects of the French Government in that part of the world, and that so far from being able to gain quiet possession of the Floridas, the settlement even of Louisiana may be considered as doubtful. Then comes the disappointment in his hopes of subduing St. Domingo.[42]

England waited until Bonaparte was sufficiently embroiled in Saint-Domingue and then declared war on him. Addington was Prime Minister.

> In one quarter Addington's task was easy. Immediately upon the signature of peace Napoleon had made the gigantic blunder of sending a powerful army out to reconquer St. Domingo. His troops died as fast there as had those of the British; and he was thoroughly entangled in a disastrous enterprise when, to his great surprise, England declared war upon him. With England's vast naval superiority at his back, no minister could miss the chance of cutting off the remnant of the French force in St. Domingo. About seven thousand prisoners were taken, very many of them by their own entreaty, so thoroughly did they loathe service in the West Indies; and it may be said with little exaggeration that the expedition cost France every man, to the number of forty thousand, and every ship that took part in it.[43]

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41 Ibid., Whitworth to Hawkesbury, January 14, 1803, 44-45. (Underlining mine.)

42 Ibid., February 28, 1803, 87.

43 J. W. Fortescue, British Statesmen of the Great War 1793-1814, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1911, 169-170.

At one time it had been conjectured that Napoleon thought of giving up the war in Saint-Domingue and even of restoring Toussaint.

> It is the want of this [money] which has nearly determined the First Consul to give up the attempt to reduce St. Domingo to his obedience. I am assured that he has twice within this fortnight resolved to leave it to its fate, and to send back Toussaint, towards whom more lenient measure have been adopted. However the shame of being defeated in his purpose, although the most dangerous - for he has to contend with the climate - has got the better of every other consideration.[44]

We do not know whether Bonaparte had at that time or ever the slightest intention of restoring Toussaint or not, yet even he is said to have admitted that he made a mistake when he tried to reconquer Saint-Domingue. He is quoted as saying, later at St. Helena, that he "should have been content to govern through Toussaint Louverture."[45]

The influence of Toussaint's action on the United States was far-reaching.

> Toussaint exercised on their [United States] history an influence as decisive as that of any European ruler. His fate placed him at a point where Bonaparte needed absolute control. St. Domingo was the only centre from which the measures needed for rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. Before Bonaparte could reach Louisiana he was obliged to crush the power of Toussaint.[46]

What would have happened had not General Victor's fleet been kept back by ice from sailing to take possession of Louisiana? We do not know. However, we do know that Napoleon's "failure in this undertaking [the conquest

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44 England and Napoleon in 1803, Whitworth to Hawkesbury, January 24, 1803, 50. (Underlining mine.)

45 Nemours, I, 133.

46 Henry Adams, History of the United States of America during the Administration of Thomas Jefferson, Albert and Charles Boni, N. Y., 1930, (formerly published by Scribners 1889) Book I, 378.

of Saint-Domingue] contributed to the sale of Louisiana to the United States."[47] There is no need here to go into the story of the negotiations of the Louisiana Purchase, except to note that they were opened immediately after Napoleon gave up Saint-Domingue, that is in the April of 1803.[48]

As the French ships left Saint-Domingue American ships came back into the ports, but the trade never recovered its former volume and importance. There were three reasons for the decline in American trade with Saint-Domingue: first, the embargoes passed in 1806, 1807 and 1808 prohibiting trade with her, and secondly, the decline in prosperity of the colony, following on the civil wars and unrest in the now independent Haiti. When the embargo was lifted in 1809, trade with Haiti was only "two percent of the value of goods sold to Toussaint Louverture alone in 1800."[49] Thirdly: during the War of 1812 the British managed to absorb most of the trade with Haiti, and the United States gradually lost interest in the country as its prosperity went down under a succession of unstable governments.[50]

What the United States lost in trade with Saint-Domingue as a result of the fall of Toussaint Louverture was more than compensated for by the gain of Louisiana, the acquisition of which would certainly not have taken place at that time had not Toussaint resisted Bonaparte when and as he did. For

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47 Logan, 112.

48 Montague, 44.

49 Montague, 47.

50 Logan, 183-187.

his own country the loss of Toussaint was a catastrophe. We can conjecture what the success of the "Conway Cabal" against Washington might have meant in the history of the United States. The removal of Toussaint was like that for Saint-Domingue. Though Dessalines declared the island independent in 1804, and he and his successors were able to maintain that independence, yet they did not secure the unity and order necessary for its development. As a sign of their wish to make a complete break with the past they changed the name of the island to Haiti, supposedly the former Indian name for the island. Unfortunately the reversion to savagery in other respects was not merely symbolic, and the former prosperous French colony was devastated by civil wars and misgovernment. The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1862, and relations with her have never since been as important to us as they were when the island was known as the "domain of Toussaint Louverture."

CONCLUSION

The role played by Great Britain and the United States in the rise and fall of Toussaint Louverture is one on which we cannot look back without feelings of regret and shame. Though historians sometimes rate as one of the few constructive transactions of Adams' administration his achievement of peace with France in 1801 and congratulate him on having been able to steer a steady course between both the strong pro-British and the pro-French influences brought to bear on him, yet this sudden shift in policy, which meant the callous abandonment of a former ally to the vengeance of Bonaparte, after his cooperation and the use of his ports were no longer useful to the United States in the prosecution of war, seems to us an act sadly lacking in justice and honor. There was no question, then, unfortunately, of a bi-partisan foreign policy, as that was one of the issues on which Federalists and anti-Federalists were sharply divided, so Jefferson and his party did not act as discreditably, perhaps, in failing to hold to the alliance and support Toussaint. However Jefferson's conduct in the affair seems to need pages and pages of explanation on the part of the historian, and, "Methinks this fellow doth protest too much." The tragic figure of Toussaint in this highly interesting episode of our national history makes it appear very decidedly a "blot on the scutcheon."

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mother Rosemary Downey, R.S.C.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Jan 26 1950
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